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ROBERTS

LETTERS ON SOUTH AMERICA.

VOLUME I.

LETTERS
ON
SOUTH AMERICA;

COMPRISING

TRAVELS ON THE BANKS OF THE PARANÁ
AND RIO DE LA PLATA.

BY

J. P. AND W. P. ROBERTSON,

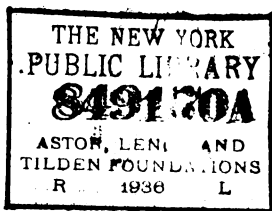
AUTHORS OF "LETTERS ON PARAGUAY," AND "FRANCIA'S REIGN."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1843.



LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,
Stamford Street.

WILLIAM CLOWES
PRINTERS
STAMFORD STREET

DEDICATION.

TO

GEORGE FREDERICK DICKSON, Esq.,

CONSUL GENERAL FOR THE UNITED PROVINCES
OF THE RIVER PLATE.

DEAR SIR,

IN dedicating, by your permission, the following sheets to you, we have undeniably good reasons for so doing.

You are so thoroughly conversant with the events which they detail, as to offer, by the mere connexion of your name with them, a sort of guarantee for their authenticity and truth.

You are, and have so long been, our personal friend, as to make it particularly gratifying to us to offer you such a testimony of our respect for your character, and acknowledgment of your kindness, especially as developed by your intercourse with ourselves.

Finally, holding, as you do, a high public station

in the service of the country which we have endeavoured to describe, we have thus the means of bearing at once testimony to your fitness for the honourable appointment of Consul-General of a foreign power, and to the impartiality, assiduity, and politeness with which you have exercised it. Nothing could be either more enviable nor honourable to your character than the fact that, after residing so long among the South Americans as a merchant of the strictest integrity, you should have been intrusted, when you left them, with the highest appointment, in a mercantile point of view, which they could have delegated to any one of their own most favoured citizens.

These are facts which we shall not attempt to weaken by the introduction of the garbage of praise. Happy the man who covets it not, but still happier he who requires it not.

We are, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servants,

THE AUTHORS.

London, January 2, 1843.

TO
GENERAL WILLIAM MILLER,
FIELD MARSHAL OF PERU,
&c., &c.

DEAR MILLER.

By the permission which you have given us to address to you the following letters, you have conferred upon us the singular favour of showing that we are the friends of a well-known and gallant soldier,—of a great and good man.

No doubt your name will travel down to posterity, not in the frail records of our fleeting memoirs, but on the page of history, when, with graver pen, she shall pourtray the revolution of a *world*.

That revolution had its origin in the ploughshares being driven in by men like yourself, merely to open the soil for the reception of the germ of independence which is destined to bud and blossom,

till, striking root downwards, and bearing fruit upwards, it shall cover the land with the unfading blessings of peace and plenty. A time cometh when "Every man sitting under his vine and under his fig-tree," shall call down blessings upon the devoted hearts and manly arms of those who paved the way for so transcendant a consummation.

Your sincere Friends,
THE AUTHORS.

London, January 2, 1843.

PREFACE.

AFTER having written “Finis” in our third volume, and glanced over the remarks contained in “Letter First, Introductory,” we find we have very little to say in the way of preface.

It is not without hesitation that we put forward our new volumes on a subject not generally considered by our bibliopolists of the capital as attractive—that of South America: but then we have to plead, that what we have already given has not been unacceptable to the public; and some kind friends, moreover, having persuaded us that we may reckon on a favourable hearing for what we have yet to say touching the infant republics of the New World, we have ventured to publish another series of Letters on South America.

We have embodied in these epistles a rapid political review of the River Plate provinces ; but we must guard our readers against the supposition that we class our sketch as one rising into history. It has no pretence to rank in that higher walk of literature. We shall be content if future and more able historians than ourselves can find, in our review, some impartial data and some useful hints, on which to found more ample annals of one of the leading republics in the immense territory which once constituted the Transatlantic colonies of Spain.

In drawing up this historical sketch we have been assisted and encouraged by our old friend his Excellency Don Manuel Moreno, Minister at our Court for the United Provinces of the River Plate ; and we take this opportunity of making him our grateful acknowledgments for the service he has rendered us.

As in the case of our Letters on Paraguay, too, we have been essentially indebted in the present series to Sir Woodbine Parish for the free access

we have enjoyed to his valuable collection of works, state papers, MSS., and other documents connected with the history of the River Plate republic.

Our readers will discover some *errata* scattered through the three volumes; but we have not thought them of sufficient importance to constitute a formal list.

London, January 2, 1843.

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LETTERS ON SOUTH AMERICA.

LETTER I.

THE AUTHORS TO THEIR READERS.

INTRODUCTORY.

London, 1842.

It has been matter of surprise to some of our personal friends that, after the success of our work on Paraguay, we should so long have postponed the fulfilment of the promise made in that work,—contingent only on its success,—that of giving a continuous history of our twenty-five years' sojourn in South America.

Our success has been unequivocal, our encouragement to go on the strongest; *mais l'homme propose, et Dieu dispose*. Who is unacquainted with the facility of laying down plans, as contrasted with the difficulty of carrying them out? Who knows not

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B

the interruptions which spring from the vicissitudes of life,—new and more imperative avocations, bad health, indolence, domestic calamities, and, in short, “the thousand ills which flesh is heir to?” Nay, who is prepared to say that, in spite of the very success which so unexpectedly attended our first literary labours, we may not have found the full force and meaning of the exclamation, “Oh that mine adversary had written a book!”

Be that as it may, we have at last determined to resume the thread of our story, and to carry it out as time and opportunity may permit, with the proviso always that we find we can instruct or amuse as we go along. We can scarcely promise to exhibit again to your gaze such a *rara avis in terra* as Doctor Francia; but we think we have enough in store to satisfy a moderate curiosity in regard both to South America itself, and to South American travels.

It would not be easy to find two individuals more closely linked by the ties of blood and friendship, as well as of worldly interests, than we have been; while yet it has happened that, during the best five and twenty years of our life, viz., from 1810 to 1835, we never contrived to spend alto-

gether two years in each others society. We were scarcely ever a month at a time in the same place. We ranged alternately from England to Paraguay, from Corrientes to Buenos Ayres, and from Buenos Ayres to England. Sometimes while the peregrinations of one were limited to those places, the other crossed the Andes, stretched along the shores of the Pacific, from Concepcion, in Chile, to Truxillo, in Peru; and so, *vice versâ*. In conclusion, the senior writer left South America, for good, in 1830, the junior in 1834.

From this latter year to the present day, our personal observations have been confined to our native country, and to an occasional glimpse at the Continent. But by means of private correspondence, official accounts, and personal intercourse with South Americans in London, we have endeavoured to observe and scan the course of events in South America.

The result of our constant change of domicile, and of our moving generally in distinct orbits, (if we may use a rather high metaphor,) has been a correspondence between us, uninterrupted for almost thirty years. It naturally embraces a

great variety of subject, and is illustrative throughout of the times in which we have lived, of the countries in which we have sojourned, and of the people among whom we have dwelt.

That we may not break in upon the chronological order of our personal narrative, we would entreat our readers to accompany us, incidentally, out of our proper sphere of action in South America. We shall seldom, however, occupy our pages with matter unconnected with that country, which shall engage our chief attention, and embrace by much the larger portion of our space. Our object, in fact, is to throw light on the late Spanish South American colonies ; any other matter introduced being merely to preserve the unity of our recital.

We are aware that no class of writing requires more circumspection than that which is designated personal narrative. We shall endeavour to restrict ours, first, to the recital of events involving principles of action calculated to instruct, or developing character likely to interest the reader ; and, secondly, to such sketches of scenery and incident of travel as we consider may probably amuse,

allowing only the mention of ourselves, when necessary, for the purpose of completing the characters of the drama in course of representation.

We shall keep to our original plan of giving the general text, something remodelled for publication, of the letters which we possess, written at the period when the events related were passing. At the same time we shall not scruple to make use of other documents, when we find we can do so with advantage to our subject. Such is the latitude we propose taking to ourselves in our personal narrative.

The historical accounts of South America, which have been given to the public, are meagre and incomplete; and, indeed, the recentness of the events of the revolution has left as yet little time for any professedly historical work to appear. On the other hand, our newspapers have always been scantily supplied with accounts of passing events, and their details have generally been erroneous in every way. Availing ourselves, therefore, of such opportunities as we have had of collecting authentic information, we hope our political review, as well as our sketches of public characters, may not be devoid of interest to those who may con-

descend to peruse our pages. We think, also, that we may not only convey to the English reader some more distinct idea than he now has of South American affairs, but that we may be of service to the states themselves, by showing them that their movements are understood here,—their backslidings marked and reprobated,—their improvements and ameliorations appreciated,—and their every step in advance towards a state of higher civilization and more enlightened government, hailed as a happy omen of their future rank and importance among the free countries of the world.

THE AUTHORS.

LETTER II.

THE AUTHORS TO THEIR READERS.

MORE MINUTELY INTRODUCTORY.

London, 1842.

BEFORE hastening into the *medias res* of South American adventures, we crave permission of our readers, more especially of those who have perused our last volume, entitled "FRANCIA'S REIGN OF TERROR," shortly to revert to that book.

By some of our respected critics doubts have been expressed, not of our veracity, but of our impartiality, in the account which we have given of the extraordinary man who was the subject of our memoir. While they implicitly rely at once upon the verity and *vraisemblance* of our personal observations in this matter, they feel themselves bound to pause for farther evidence ere they lend entire credence to the history of Francia, as supported merely by the testimony of others, conveyed by us into our pages.

Now, while we cannot but express our sense of obligation for the credit attached to our personal record, we must confess ourselves at a loss to account for the reluctance, in some journals, to accord the same degree of credit to that of the numerous witnesses who strengthened our facts by their accumulated testimony in regard to Francia. We never, from personal observation, pretended to give that tyrant's history, subsequently to 1815; and if we have carried it down to 1838, it has been upon the abundant and corroborative evidence which others supplied, not we,—evidence adduced in so minute a manner, that, comparing it with all we personally knew, and with what was, more or less, in Buenos Ayres, matter of notoriety, it was impossible to resist.

If history may not be written upon such data,—if facts, because apparently improbable, (and yet not the *worst* of them without example,) must be disregarded on any mere hypothesis of incredibility, we know not how the chain of historical truth, and especially that which links preceding ages to posterity, can be maintained unbroken. Most historical writers spring up after the age of which they give the annals. Few of them, indeed, have had an

opportunity of consulting the contemporaries of the events which they record. They are forced,—and forced from the very nature of the case,—to rely upon written evidence, however contradictory, and upon that alone. Surely, then, those who have an opportunity of sifting, cross-examining, and comparing with their own knowledge, the oral testimony of living witnesses, are in a better position for writing a history or memoir, than those who have lacked such opportunities. When the writer can confide in the integrity, impartiality, and judgment of his informants, he is enabled to draw up a record of which he can conscientiously say, it is one of TRUTH. And such, we think, we can affirm our's of Francia to be.

In order to corroborate our statement, we gave up the names of more than twelve persons,—some of them our own agents, and men of high character. All of our witnesses were respectable and intelligent,—all had been personally cognizant of Francia's deeds of cruelty and despotism; and three-fourths of them were victims of his capricious policy and cruel sway.

We adduced the unimpeached and unimpeachable testimony of Messrs. Renggher and Long-

champs in support of our statements, in regard to the worst points of Francia's character, and to the most atrocious of his deeds. Yet, while some critics have doubted them from the mere horror of the facts which they embody, others have asserted that we had given no authority for our representations.

One celebrated and ably conducted periodical (the Quarterly Review for April, 1839), although it admits the veracity and favourably reviews the production of Messrs. Renggher and Longchamps, repudiates some of our facts, and hesitates a doubt of others, which, notwithstanding, are the identical facts related by the Swiss authors in question, whom the reviewer characterizes as sober and impartial writers. In truth, all the worst of Francia's tyrannical acts,—of those least credible from their enormity,—are told, every one of them, by the Swiss gentlemen in question, and to their book we expressly referred in support of what we said.

The Dictator's cruelty to the old Spaniards, for instance; his dungeons, prisons, gallows, chains, torture-chamber, Tevego (place of exile),—his murder of the Pelado, and the *mode* of it,—his

shooting in the market place of his old comrades and associates,—his arrest and treatment of our own agent, Gomez,* the tyrant's persecution, even unto chains, imprisonment, and death, of the most respectable inhabitants of Assumption,—his ruthless demolition of the city, and his wretched efforts to rebuild it,—are all acts of Francia's cruel reign minutely and gravely related by Messrs. Renggher and Longchamps.

In adopting their story as that of trustworthy journalists, and eye-witnesses of the things they record, the reviewer necessarily adopts the above related facts. They are precisely those which we ourselves detailed in "Francia's Reign;" and it is for the public to consider how far that reviewer can be consistent who pronounces of *one and the same events*, that they are sober and authentic when related by the Swiss gentlemen, but turn to exaggeration, and lose their credibility, when told by us.

We have only one solution to offer of this rather novel, not to say enigmatical, critique, and it is the following:—

'Though the facts related by the authors mentioned, and ourselves, are identical, yet they and we

* See Appendix, No. 1.

wrote under widely different circumstances. They wrote while yet trembling under the recollection of the despot's iron rule, and oppressed by the associations which during their six years captivity had accumulated in their minds, as day by day they witnessed the doom of others, and trembled for their own. In common with all the Dictator's prisoners and détenus, they were reduced to a state of mental numbness which paralyzed their powers of free delineation and expression. Thus they softened into shade features of character which it was our duty, as faithful and not intimidated historians, to bring out boldly and prominently on the canvass. But farther, in giving to the world the life and actions of so bad a man as the ruler of Paraguay, we found it impossible, neither did we think it proper, to withhold the expression of our abhorrence, indignation, and contempt, for which many of those actions called. Possibly, while thus offering our comments on them, stigmatizing the general principles on which they had their rise, and warning the South Americans against their withering and pestilential effects in time to come, we overstepped the limits permitted by the reviewer to the free

expression of our reprobation of all such principles. In the work of the Swiss gentlemen, little, if anything, of this kind is to be found ; and hence perhaps, (but we speak hypothetically,) the reviewer's complacency with the work containing simple facts, almost timidly stated, and his disrelish of the work containing the *same facts*, announced with unqualified condemnation as regards themselves, and with warning as regard the principles from which they emanated.

One daily paper has remarked that we gave no authority for the statement that Francia ordered the sentinel to fire upon all who stood loitering about his palace. It is one of the facts distinctly stated by Renggher at p. 108 of his little work. The same paper asks whether Francia's subsequent revocation of this barbarous edict was not a proof of his humanity ? It was at most one of his caprice ; for to say that it was humane to give up the plan of shooting innocent loiterers, were a very unwonted stretch of charitable indulgence.

That the order was given and acted upon there is no dispute ; but it might as well be said that the abandonment of the system of proscription at Rome, after it had answered its object of spreading

universal terror, was a proof of the humanity of the Triumvirate, as that the Dictator's counter-order was an evidence of his clemency.

Again, it has been objected that had the treatment of M. Bonpland been such as described by Mr. Renggher, and subsequently confirmed by the botanist to ourselves, it is not in the nature of things to believe that he should have been so anxious to return to Paraguay.

Now, in the first place, we very expressly stated that Bonpland's *expulsion* from Paraguay was as cruel as his seizure, for he had acquired, during his captivity, a considerable property there, which he cultivated with fondness, and superintended with care. That property was his all, and though not confiscated, it was virtually taken from him when he was driven, at an hour's notice, out of the Republic. This property Bonpland was anxious to recover, which he could only do by Francia permitting him to re-enter Paraguay and to dispose of his possessions.

In the second place, who knows not the enthusiasm of philosophers when they engage in an ardent and absorbing pursuit? Who is there, acquainted with Bonpland, that does not know and

admire his inextinguishable love of botanical research? and who, that knows this, would be surprised to hear that, *at any risk*, he was anxious to renew a series of experiments, and to complete an interesting collection of the rich varieties of plants and valuable medicinal herbs of a *terra incognita* like Paraguay?

A work of high authority, by Sir Woodbine Parish,* has been published since we wrote ours, and many of our statements concerning Paraguay and Francia, as well as regarding M. Bonpland, have been amply confirmed by that author. See especially pp. 226 to 237 of his volume. While not one of our facts is contradicted or even impugned, Paraguay is said (p. 226) to be "under the despotic rule of Dr. Francia." At page 228 it is said of him—"A sort of Mephistopheles, he was not long ere he set the members of the Government by the ears, and by his intrigues brought about their resignation." Farther on (pp. 233, 234) we find His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires saying, "Francia's nomination, in the first instance,

* Buenos Ayres and the provinces of the Rio de la Plata, by Sir Woodbine Parish, K. C. H., many years his Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Ayres. London. John Murray. 1838.

was for three years, at the expiration of which time he took care to have his power confirmed for life. The Deputies, who passed this Act in their simplicity, returned to their houses, exulting in an arrangement by which they were saved all farther trouble; whilst the tyrant they had set up commenced a reign which, for systematic selfishness, cruelty, and unrestrained despotism, is almost unparalleled in any country.

“His first object, as may be supposed, was to put down all opposition, and this he did by imprisoning, banishing, or putting to death every individual of wealth or influence who could in any way interfere with him in his despotic sway. His spies were in every house; the most trivial expression of dissatisfaction was construed into treason; and ere long no man dared to speak to his neighbour for fear of being denounced. Thus he silenced, by terror, all opposition from within, and, lest any should be attempted from without, he proceeded to establish a system of non-intercourse, which for nearly twenty years he has rigorously enforced.”

M. Bonpland's case is shortly stated at pp. 236 and 237, in the latter of which the Supreme

Dictator's government is spoken of as "the tyrannical rule of a crazy old despot."

So much in vindication of our statements, as well as general reflections, touching the reign of Dr. Francia,—a vindication which we have been the rather induced to put forth, because, once admit a doubt as to the truth of his appalling history, and the whole benefit intended by its narrative for mankind, but *more especially* for the South Americans, is lost.

History based on truth, like the stage when used for its legitimate purpose, is intended "To hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time, its form and pressure."

But history, distorted and disfigured by unfaithful chroniclers, like the stage degraded by buffoons, gives up "things rank and gross in nature merely." We see no more in the one case than the other the pure imagery of truth; and divested of it, Francia's life and that of Tiberius come to make upon us no more serious impression than we imbibe on witnessing, upon the boards, the feats of Blue Beard or the heroics of Tom Thumb.

Our book has now been published for upwards of three years, and it has circulated all over the late

Spanish colonies. It was from those quarters that we were to look for a refutation of our statements, if erroneous, exaggerated, or untrue; for there, and particularly in the River Plate provinces, parties knew, as well as ourselves, the real state of affairs in Paraguay.

But what is the fact? Why that without any interference on our part, nay, wholly without our previous knowledge, the "Letters on Paraguay and Francia's Reign of Terror," translated into Spanish, are in actual process of publication by monthly numbers in Montevideo.* Passing over the compliments which are paid to the work, in the public announcement of its republication in a Spanish garb, we will merely say that the translator (we do not even know his name) states that the *truthfulness* of the whole book forms its great recommendation to the South American native reader. And we have only, in conclusion, to observe that ours is the first English work on South America which has been translated into the Spanish language by a native of the very countries we have described.

* "El Nacional—Diario Politico, Literario y Comercial. Montevideo, 30 June, 1841."

We suggest, without affirming that the philosoph of the case may be this. The minds of men were taken *by surprise* on reading the annals of Francia's despotism and crime, and the first impulse was to refuse credence to such a series of horrors acted in our own day, and of which it seemed impossible men should have remained wholly ignorant for so long a time. The character of a living despot is generally developed to the world by degrees; facts come in gradual succession before it, giving time to examine, sift, and digest the whole. Each new atrocity is a corroboration of a former, and prepares the mind to receive a succeeding act of barbarity. But when the whole enormity of the long career of a guilty and bloody tyrant bursts on the view at once,—one dark deed following quick upon the heels of another, all condensed into half a day's reading,—and all this of a man still living and still ruling a Christian land,—such a detail is on the spur of the moment deemed incredible, and our feelings pronounce against the *probability* of the case, ere reason, philosophy, and experience, can come to our aid, to satisfy us of its truth.

No one doubts that Mehemet Ali is a despot—a vindictive prince, who has commanded or

sanctioned more bloody atrocities than perhaps any other during the same period in modern times. But Mehemet Ali's career has been open to the view of all, and his character has been developed to the world by degrees. Had Francia's acts been as gradually laid bare to the scrutinizing eye of mankind, as Mehemet Ali's, the dictator would naturally and indisputably have taken the rank which we have assigned to him, and no one would have been incredulous of his blood-thirsty nature, or of his despotic sway. Mehemet Ali and Francia, indeed, have much in common, with, however, this essential distinction, that while the former has shown a disposition to be a despot both at home and abroad, the latter has been content to be one at home,—a chief cause, we may add, of his savage track having been not only bloody, but silent as that of the tiger.

Dr. Francia has gone to his long, his dark, his terrible account. To *his* earthly tribunal, where mercy never sat, and justice had no place, many were called and thence hurried into eternity. He has now himself been cited to appear before a judgment seat, where the immolated victim may stand on the vantage ground; and should other

public men in South America,—we speak advisedly, —be tempted to tread in the footsteps of him who was the ruthless Dictator of Paraguay, let them consider that their deeds will one day come to light, and let them forget not how emphatically we are told that there is a retributive justice, from which, here or hereafter, we cannot escape, and which will too surely overtake the shedder of innocent blood.

Many rumours were afloat of Francia's death before it actually took place, but it is now matter of history that he died in Assumption on the 20th of September, 1840. His disease was dropsy, from which he had suffered for some considerable time previously, and he expired quietly in his bed. His age was eighty-three. The closing scene of his long life has not yet been laid open; but as those who have succeeded to the Government are gradually assuming an intercourse with their surrounding neighbours, we shall, no doubt, soon be put in possession of many interesting facts concerning the latter end of the extraordinary man who, for about eight and twenty years, isolated and desolated Paraguay.

THE AUTHORS.

LETTER III.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Landing at Corrientes—Its Traffic—Misery—Artigas's Tactics—
 Personal insecurity—A New Acquaintance—Don Pedro Campbell and his Page—An Irish Gaucho—A Harangue—The Gaucho and the Governor—Campbell's History—Reflections.

London, 1842.

DISMISSING with the two preceding letters from "the authors," the history of Paraguay, and of our adventures there, I shall now transport you, along with myself, from the republic of Doctor Francia to the province of Corrientes. It was at that time acknowledging the supreme rule of His Excellency the Protector, Don José Artigas.* It had formed previously, as it now again forms, one of the United Provinces of the River Plate.

I landed at Corrientes, with a large property in 1815, and I found that the state of anarchy and confusion, of bloodshed, robbery, and violence, which had been consequent on giving up the town to the predatory band of Artigas, had a little, but

* We have given our readers a sketch of him in Letter VI. of "Francia's Reign of Terror."

only a little, subsided on their withdrawal from the place.

Corrientes is the capital of the large and fertile portion of the River Plate territory, which goes under the name of Entre Rios, as being nearly insulated between two great rivers, the parent stream of the Paraná, and the Uruguay.

The traffic of Corrientes, is chiefly in hides and sheep's wool, though it also abounds in cotton, the sugar cane, and stately timber. All these articles it exports to Buenos Ayres, and receives in return specie and manufactures. The average of its exports, in peaceable times, was five hundred thousand dollars annually. Its returns were about seven hundred and fifty thousand. But this province, like all the others of South America, had been the theatre of such continued civil war and general depredation, that while many of the great landed proprietors were ruined, all of them lived in *terrorem* because of the lawless sway of Artigas, and frequent inroads made by him upon their territory. He robbed, pillaged, plundered, them; drove the owners of estancias from their homes, and the cattle to the eastern bank of the Uruguay. The estancias became depopulated, the herdsmen were seized upon for soldiers; all the natural ties

of society were broken or relaxed ; the country was overspread with fierce and lawless banditti ; rapine and lust stalked over the length and breadth of the land ; agriculture was abandoned ; the inroads of the Indians from the Great Chaco were frequent ; such herds of horses and cattle, as were too numerous and too much dispersed to be systematically driven from the territory, sought shelter in the woods, and there became *alzado* or wild ; the forests teemed with untamed colts ; large flocks of vultures were to be seen hanging over the newly dropped calves and foals, ready to devour them ; wild dogs, called *cimarrones*, like evening wolves, ranged the country in droves ; the houses were abandoned, and rare was the mounted gaucho to be met with, who was not a robber or assassin, often both. All beyond five leagues of the precincts of the town was scoured by men who lived by depredation, and bold indeed was the estanciero who, even with a well armed equipment of slaves and followers, dared to visit his desolate and abandoned home. The huge waggons which were wont to convey the hides from estancia to estancia, and to the different ports for shipment, were dismantled and scattered over the country, to serve as tents or bivouacks for the erratic plunderers, who, half naked, wholly reckless, subsisted on the

cattle they could take with their lazos, and enjoyed the luxury of spirits, gambling, and segars, when they could murder their fellow creature, and rifle him of his treasure, or plunder a village, and make off with the spoil. All this lawless outrage, if not encouraged by Artigas, was at least winked at by him. On any emergency he could unite the scattered banditti under his own banner, and carry them in fearful and unbroken phalanx, at the rate of five and twenty leagues a-day, to any point of the country, or against any force of the enemy on which he meditated an attack. After his object was attained, in order at once to save the expense of maintaining them, and to gratify their love of erratic and predatory habits, the freebooters were disbanded, and again the country, throughout its whole extent, became one vast scene of horror and desolation.

It must be observed, however, that the character of the Artigueño soldier or freebooter, is modified in the *Correntino*. Lying contiguous to Paraguay, and in a nearly tropical climate, the inhabitant of the province of Corrientes assimilates more in character to the Paraguayan, than to the hardy, resolute, and daring native of the Banda Oriental.

The Correntino is naturally of more docile and industrious habits than the Oriental, and if not strongly acted upon by accidental circumstances, the Correntinos generally are an inoffensive and trustworthy race.

Although their more peaceable character thus tended to restore order after the troops of Artigas had last retired from the province, it was still under no very agreeable circumstances, that, having left my brother in Paraguay, I took refuge in Corrientes. Artigas's name, and Artigas's passport alone were respected. They formed the ægis which threw protection around those, and those only, who were permitted to ensconce themselves under its defence. Wanting this indispensable safeguard, I neither knew how to shield my person nor how to dispose of my property, so as to permit me finally to abandon a country so devoted to intestine broil and general devastation.

The governor of Corrientes, Colonel Mendez, was my sincere and intimate friend,—friends also were most of the respectable inhabitants of the place; but the governor's control extended merely over his two or three companies of militia, and the more respectable the inhabitants were, the more they

had to dread from the inroads of the Artigueño plunderers. Being considered one of the most opulent of the inhabitants, I should have been in more danger than any of them, but that it was known that I had recently experienced the favour and protection of Artigas. This, occasional largesses of money, and casks of bottled porter to the most influential men of the Artigueño party, was a good deal in my favour, and saved me from many a perilous ordeal to which myself, my goods, and my chattels would have been otherwise exposed. Yet I lived, notwithstanding all this, in a state of continual alarm; for I saw that caprice, want, covetousness, inebriety, or personal pique, might at any moment let in upon me a gang of the organized brigands,—give my body to the dogs, and my property to the winds.

At this critical juncture I chanced to make the acquaintance of one of the most extraordinary, daring, and all but desperate men I ever knew. Sitting one evening under the corridor of my house, there came up to my very chair, on horseback, a tall, raw boned, ferocious looking man, in Gaucho attire, with two cavalry pistols stuck in his girdle, a sabre in a rusty steel scabbard pending from a

besmeared belt of half-tanned leather, red whiskers and mustachios,—hair uncombed of the same colour, matted with perspiration, and powdered with dust. His face was not only burnt almost to blackness by the sun, but it was blistered to the eyes; while large pieces of shrivelled skin stood ready to fall from his parched lips. He wore a pair of plain ear-rings, a foraging cap, a tattered poncho, blue jacket, with tarnished red facings; a large knife in a leathern sheath; a pair of potro boots, and rusty iron spurs, with rowels an inch and a half in diameter.

His horse was a noble animal, and sweated profusely. His gored sides were panting; his nostrils distended: he champed his enormous bit, tossing his head till he foamed at the mouth, and besprinkled both his own body and that of his master with froth.

Behind this Orlando Furioso, there rode one whom he called *has pàge* (pronounced in Spanish gutturally) or page; but such a page saw I never. He was the counterpart of his master, except that the locks in the one case were red, and in the other jet black, coarse and tangled as the uncombed mane of a colt just taken up from grass.

The page rode with the head of his horse close upon the tail of his master's; and then both throwing the reins over the heads of their jaded steeds, they dismounted.*

I took them for two of the most ferocious of Artigas's banditti, and supposing they would presently be followed by more of the same class, I muttered, *sub silentio*, "*Ave Maria, ora pro nobis.*"

As I was ever wont to do upon occasions of such ominous visits, I rose and requested my two guests

* It may be proper here to observe that the Gaucho, when he is about to alight, throws the bridle over his horse's head, a practice which has originated in his so often riding wild colts, as to require when he dismounts, the command of them given him by the possession of the reins; when he has secured his horse's fore legs by fixing round them, above the fetlock, a leathern thong, called a maneador, and in the shape of a pair of fetters, he then lets his reins fall upon the ground, and leaves his horse standing at the door. You often see the animal endeavouring, even so shackled, to get away. After making a few awkward plunges with his fore legs, and coming down with his imprisoned feet upon the dangling reins, he gets so severely checked by the enormous bit in use, as soon to bring himself up. When the Gaucho runs to fetch him back, he does not stop to loose his fetters, but taking up the rein, makes him jump after him to the station he had abandoned. There he once more leaves him *in statu quo*, and with perfect indifference. You seldom see a Gaucho punish his horse with the whip, though upon occasion of urgent haste or taming, he often spurs him most unmercifully.

to be seated. Often had I gone through a similar ceremony with the Artigueños, but never with two such fierce looking troopers as those who now stood before me. I was going into the house to order porter and spirits, and to bring out some silver, when, to my great astonishment, but still greater delight, the master of the page respectfully took off his foraging cap, made an awkward obeisance, and said in bad Spanish, with an accent which soon convinced me he was no *Creole* Gaucho, “No se aflija, Señor Robertson, estamos bien aquí.” (Don’t put yourself out of the way, Mr. Robertson, we are very well as we are.)

The Hibernian brogue; the mangled Spanish; the countenance when closely scanned; the carrotty locks, and bright grey eyes, all revealed to me a son of the Sister Isle, transformed into a more fearful looking Gaucho than any native one I had ever beheld.

When I had a little recovered from my surprise, I asked my strange guest who it was I had the honour to accost.

“Por Dios!” said he; “don’t you know Peter Campbell?”—“Cam-bèll,” he continued, laying a strong accent on the last syllable. “Pedro Cam-

bèll," (Paythro he pronounced it,) "as the Gauchers calls me? Troth, now, an' don't ye know me; Paythro *Cam-bèll*? An' ye never heerd of that name, then * you're the only gentleman in the who'al country as has not."

"Oh, Mr. Campbell," I replied, "I have not only heard your name, but of your fame; though this is the first time I have had the pleasure of making your acquaintance."

"The honour's mine, an' you plase, Sur," said Don Paythro; "and now if you'll jist allow me to introduce my friend Don Edwardo," (he that enacted the page,) "he'll take the horses to the Corràl, and I'll hopen up a bit o' business wid you."

Hereupon, Don Edwardo, the squire of Don Pedro, was introduced as his countryman from Tipperary, and as second among the Gauchers only to himself. He said he was also a great favourite with Pèpe.

"Pray?" I asked, "who is Pèpe?"

"Pèpe? why Josè Artigas,"† he replied; "we're all hand an' glove; hail fellows well met, as

* I will not repeat the profane adjuration by which Mr. Campbell enforced his argument.

† Jose in Spanish is, familiariter, Pèpe.

the saying is, at the Purificacion.* Sure, wasn't yourself there a month ago? and havn't I jist cut the camp † to see you, and to ask, if I may make so bould, what ye're a gowin' for to do, since they banished you from Paraguay? Wasn't he an ould sinner that Francia, and wasn't it me that tould Pèpe it was an everlastin' shame to trate you in that same way as his people did at the Bajada? An' wasn't it me that would have smashed the white livered gentry as tuck you in the boat at this side o' Goya? Only, you see, my people came to the village a day after the fair to get the boat for to go to your ship the Inglesita; and so, faith and troth, the day was lost. But if ever I catch that thaif of a sargint as stole your personals, if it isn't I that'll make him rue the day, never fear, that ever he robbed a countryman of mine; and so I told Pèpe I would, the very last words as ever I spoke to him. And so, says Pèpe, God speed you, says he; an' what *for* shouldn't ye do what you plase in the camp? By my troth, Don Pèpe's an honest gentleman; and if so be he's compelled to take

* Artigas's encampment on the banks of the Uruguay.

† In Spanish, "Cortar el Campo," signifies to cross the country, but as liberally translated by Don Pedro, it is "to cut the camp."

the cattle now and then, sure, where's the harm, when it's for the good of the counthrey?"

At this point of Don Pedro's harangue, the Governor Mendez, accompanied by an aid-de-camp, and escorted by two of his militia guard, called, as he was wont, to drink a few bottles of porter. Indeed he was seldom over an hour's chit-chat without a couple of quarts for his own share. The zest with which he quaffed goblet after goblet, smacked his lips, and said "Què bueno!" how excellent, showed clearly enough, how much he preferred to the pure waters of the Paranà, the muddy element of the Thames, when made comfortable with malt seasoned with hops, and coated to overflowing with cream, as it emerged from its air tight prison, the bottle, into the free and capacious glass which he held up to receive the too brimful contents.

No sooner did his Lordship, the Governor, perceive my new guest than he alighted hastily from his horse, and running up to Mr. Campbell, gave him an embrace of mingled cordiality and respect. Don Pedro returned the salutation by a slap on the back, that made the Governor's frame shake to its centre.

The Irish Gaucho then assumed a tone of protection, and an air of consequence altogether at variance with his deferential bearing when he was with me alone. He seated himself upon a vacant chair, and tapping with his hand the bottom of another unoccupied one, he desired the Governor, in the most familiar manner, to sit down. "Sientese, compadre,"* said he, "And let us drink prosperity and long life to Don Pèpe, and to his namesake my little Gaucho godson." Don Pedro then reminded the Governor how he ought to say hip! hip! hurrah! and how to give three times three, *à la Inglesa*.

I may observe that although I have given Don Pedro's colloquy in English, a good deal of what he said was in Spanish altogether, and all of it interlarded with Spanish words, when he could not, even after several attempts, find an English equivalent.

Begging my pardon for the liberty he was taking, Mr. Campbell said he would explain himself next day, and defer also till then the opening of his business. Without further ceremony he made

* Don Pedro had stood godfather to one of Mendez, the Governor's, children.

me one of his awkward salaams, called his esquire, Don Eduardo, helped him to a glass of porter, shook the Governor heartily by the hand, clapped him once more on the shoulder, and vaulting with all his gear and a Gaucho-like agility into his recado or saddle, he rode off under friendly recognitions and salutations, as he passed along, from his many simple and admiring friends, Correntinos and Correntinas of high and low degree.

“Hombre guapo! there goes a fine brave fellow,” said the Governor, with an air of profound respect, uplifted eyes, and a confirmatory shake of the head, which seemed to intimate, moreover, that Don Pedro’s bravery and daring had manifested themselves in rather an equivocal manner. But Colonel Mendez, on taking leave, advised me by all means to cultivate the friendship of my countryman; “for,” said he, “next to the Protector* himself, there is no man can be of such service to you in this province as Don Pedro Campbell.”

I had heard a great deal of Don Pedro; the Governor told me a good deal more; and from the whole, take this condensed account of his history.

* Artigas.

One of the many deserters from General Beresford's army, Don Pedro was a native of Ireland, a Roman Catholic in creed, and had been apprenticed, in his youth, to a tanner. He remained behind his countrymen, when they abandoned the River Plate, and making his way to Corrientes, was there employed in a large tannery by a first rate citizen of the place, Don Angel Blanco; and so long as the country remained tranquil, Don Pedro conducted himself as a sober, quiet, and well behaved subject.

But naturally turbulent and enterprizing, no sooner did the revolution break out than he offered his services to Artigas, performed many daring exploits, and so spread the terror of his name, especially over the province of Corrientes, as very soon to become a formidable, and consequently an influential man. His personal prowess was prodigious; his heart as bold as a lion's; not a Gaucho surpassed him in horsemanship, nor in the general science of the country to which he frequently appealed—to wit, a fencing match with a large carving knife as his rapier, and a poncho wrapt round his left arm as a shield. I did not hear that in any of his single combats he had ever killed his opponent,

but he had maimed, wounded, and disabled so many, that none dared at length to engage him.

I have often heard of his going into a pulperia, or South American gin shop, where whetted knives were gleaming all around him, and the strife of the bacchanals generally ended in the death of one or two of the combatants. At Don Pedro's presence, bearing down, with his poncho-covered or left arm, all opposition, and with the sabre in his right hand cutting and slashing—so, however, as only to wound those who opposed him,—at the presence of the raw-boned red-haired Irishman, the Gaucho murderers quailed, and the affray was at an end. Courts of law there were none powerful enough, or vigilant enough, to take cognizance of such deeds. The corpses of the men slain at the gin houses were carried to the church door, and were there laid out till the burial fees were subscribed, without which preliminary there could be no more decent burial of the dead in Corrientes than in London; for it is not in this country alone that we are taxed, first on our being baptized, when we come helpless *into* the world, and then on going *out* of it, when we have ceased to belong to the living.

Such as I have described him was Don Pedro

Campbell. At the time at which he introduced himself to me, he was dreaded by the Gauchos, admired by the estancieros, and respected by the inhabitants at large. Being in the confidence of Artigas, he brought, in aid of his personal claims to deference, the acknowledged favour and patronage of that lawless but omnipotent chieftain, and altogether he was certainly a person to be feared as an enemy, and very convenient to be possessed of, in troublesome times, as a friend.

As I pondered over Don Pedro's history, I could not help thinking, of what rare occurrences revolutions are productive.

While yet a tanner's apprentice in Ireland, and planning, as the utmost scope of his ambition, the project of one day becoming a journeyman, he becomes subsequently a private soldier in the British army, and finally one of the most feared and respected men, in a province overrun with daring bands of assassins, who, though formidable to their own countrymen, yet crouched to the foreigner, and were, at the same time, stigmatized by him as "a set of white livered rascals."

Who should then have told him, with any prospect of being believed, that a certain revolution

should take place in a part of the world of which Campbell had never heard; that he should be dragged from the tan-pit to the field; that he should thereafter be transformed to a formidable Gaucho, and become the redoubted hero of a country larger than England; that from a Gaucho he should become a naval commander-in-chief; and that from the scourer of plains and a terror of banditti, he should prove himself the scourge of the naval power of such a man as Francia, and be celebrated on the Paranà as a very Dirk Hatterick to every navigator issuing from a port of Paraguay:—what credibility, I say, would have been attached to a prediction such as this? who would have listened to the prophecy? and yet every part of it came literally to pass with Campbell.

How often, when neither observers are aware nor the possessors are conscious of it, may the latent germs of an innate ambition be silently fructifying in the inner man, till some unlooked for, yet fitting opportunity ripen them into bearing fruit? What would Bonaparte have been in the world, but for the tumultuous times of the French revolution? A very good colonel of artillery, perhaps, and little

more. "But I found," he said, "the crown of France *at my feet*, and I picked it up."

There are many Bonapartes in this world as well as "mute inglorious Miltons;" only circumstances have not so dovetailed into their fortunes, as to make some of them great conquerors and others immortal bards.

Let any man ask himself how much of the good or evil, the prosperity or adversity of his span of life has been owing to his own wise calculations as to the future? I believe, if he spoke the truth, he would say that, often where he has most expected to succeed, there he has most signally failed; and that, when he least expected a triumph, there it has been most unexpectedly achieved by him. In other words, as we have already had occasion to say, *L'homme propose et Dieu dispose*.

Yours, &c.

J. P. R.

LETTER IV.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

The Piràgua—Sailing into the confluence of the Rivers Paraguay and Paranà—Arrival at Corrientes, and a meeting there—Origin of the name of Corrientes—An attack by Artigueños gallantly repulsed by an Englishman.

My first landing at Corrientes, on my way up to Paraguay was picturesque enough, and my second approach to its hospitable shore, when banished forth from Francia's dominions was also something out of the common way.

I came down the river Paraguay in a piràgua, a vessel unknown to the English reader. Although it floats on the waters, and conveyed me and all the *debris* of our Paraguay property safely from Assumption to Corrientes, it was a vessel propelled by neither wind nor steam. It was, as elsewhere described, a large square box, with a sort of house, or as it was called *trough*, built on the top of it; and being only guided by huge oars or sweeps, the navigating in it was anything but plain sailing.

After six days of unwearied exertion, how-

ever, my sturdy and laborious Paraguay crew brought the piràgua to the mouth of the Paraguay, or to the confluence of that river and the Paranà, a short way above Corrientes. As we emerged from behind an island which lay in our way, on the Paraguay, and obstructed our view, all at once the mighty expanse of the mingling waters of those two majestic rivers, burst upon my sight; and truly I know not in what part of the world a grander piece of scenery is to be found. The waters, at the confluence, spread out, like a great estuary, and many beautiful islands lie scattered on their surface. The surrounding and more distant banks are on all sides clothed with wood, and on the Paranà border, the fine rising grounds which swell up behind, enhance the beauty of the scene. Strong currents and eddies whirl in the various channels, and play about the islands; till coming to a lower point, the grand and deepening body of the united streams, compressed in breadth, flows down in smooth and tranquil silence.

The two rivers, after they have become one, maintain, for many miles, their respective colours, in a clearly defined line,—the Paraguay having a red and muddy appearance, the Paranà a clear

and pellucid one;—but both merging, at last, into this glassy and beautiful aspect.

The town of Corrientes, finely situated on a high and jutting point of land, lies at the confluence of the rivers, and commands a noble view of the scene I have slightly described, as well as of the opposite shore of the Gran Chaco. A bold and abrupt height on that side of the town, called the Point of Saint Sebastian, lying towards the river, abuts with the waters below; and it is here that the view is obtained in the greatest perfection. The point forms a small battery, having three or four pieces of ordnance mounted, which command the principal channel of the river, and which are guarded by a couple of soldiers or sentinels; and the point itself, viewed from the river, is a very picturesque object.

The proper name of Corrientes is *San Juan de las siete Corrientes*, or St. John of the Seven Currents—so called, from the number of currents which flow from the rivers Paraguay and Paranà at their confluence. It seems singular that the town, instead of preserving its original name of Saint John, should have been designated by the adjunct of “Currents;” but certain it is, that by its first name

nobody would now ever know that such a place was spoken of.

The town contains from 5000 to 6000 inhabitants, and, like all Spanish cities, it is laid out in squares. There are some good churches, and in one or two of the principal streets, some large and commodious houses, inhabited by the magnates of the place. There is rather an unfinished looking plaza mayor, or great public square, in which the town house and public prison stand. The streets are miserable, unpaved, a mixture of mud and sand; and the houses of the poorer classes have generally a mean appearance. Many of them are mere hovels. Nevertheless, the number of gardens abounding with trees, shrubs and flowers, which, in profuse variety, dispute the territory whereon the town stands, with the houses themselves, give the city a picturesque air, which the poverty of the habitations cannot destroy. The harbour, or *port* as it is called, of Corrientes is formed simply by the bank of the river, along which vessels of 100 tons burthen lie conveniently for the purpose of discharging and again loading their cargoes.

But to return to my piràgua.

As soon as we emerged from the Paraguay, we were involved in many ungainly efforts during our struggle to emancipate ourselves from the countervailing actions of the different currents and eddies which embarrass navigation at the confluence of the rivers. Like Noah's ark upon the flood of waters, the piragua was driven to and fro ; now carried by a rapid upon some small island, which looked like a clump of trees raising their heads above the flood, and now whirling half a dozen times round, as if looking about for the right current which was to carry us downward.

Our rowers, with great energy and perseverance, buffeted these contending obstacles to our straight course, and at length their efforts brought our box-ship into the channel of the Paranà, leading to the port of Corrientes.

As we neared it, I walked with my glass on the house top of my ark, anxiously watching what was passing on shore, and wholly ignorant of the state of affairs there. As we did not know when my brother left Paraguay, where we should be able to take up our abode, we had agreed that if things were tolerably settled at Corrientes, he should land there, and in case of remaining, hoist a white flag

on the point of Saint Sebastian, whenever a vessel which might be carrying a similar one should come in sight.

I had hoisted my flag accordingly, and to my no small joy I saw, after a time, the signal answered in the manner agreed upon. Presently I saw my brother, accompanied by our friend Mr. Postlethwaite, as busily engaged with his telescope as I was with mine, and I fancied I could hear both of them laughing as they witnessed the uncouth movements of my unwieldy piragua, and discerned, by degrees, the miscellaneous articles which be-decked it. Fastened to the poop were various parts of the furniture of our Paraguay establishment; specimens of Indian weapons of war; lions and tigers stuffed to the life with yerba; live parrots and rare birds in one part, and a *gran bestia* or species of hippopotamus in another. To crown all, some heathen images might be seen, which looked like the *penates* under whose protection we were sallying forth in search of another abode.

It was thus that we met under the two white banners, one afloat and one ashore, waving in token of the now nearly hushed din and discord

which had so lately, with their iron tongues, kept the worthy citizens of Corrientes in fever and alarm.

The first day of my sojourn in Corrientes was passed in convivial reminiscences, and in mutual explanations of what had happened during the time which had intervened between the present and our last eventful meeting in Paraguay. My brother gave me many details of the lawless state of society in which he had found Corrientes on landing; and among many other anecdotes illustrative of the times, he gave me one so characteristic at once of the Artigueño soldier, or bandit, and of Mr. Postlethwaite, that I must here briefly recount it.

During the time that these Artigueño soldiers were quartered on the terror-stricken town, they would ride up and down the streets, and, should they meet a respectably dressed person, they would spur their horses up to him and demand money; if not instantly given, they would draw their sabres, and either terrify the passenger into compliance with their demands, or cut him down without ceremony should he demur.

One day, then, as Mr. Postlethwaite, mounted

on a sturdy and active pony, was proceeding in the course of his business to the harbour, two of these ruffians issued from the door of a pulperia (gin shop), where they had been drinking and gambling. Throwing themselves into the saddles of their horses, which as usual stood in the street, awaiting their riders, they pounced upon "Don Juan."

"Give us a couple of dollars," said one of them abruptly and insolently to Mr. Postlethwaite.

"I have them not," he replied, (and this was the fact).

Three or four hasty oaths followed from the soldiers, and while they were in the act of drawing their sabres, Mr. Postlethwaite suddenly applied his whip to his mettlesome pony, which started off at the height of its speed. The enraged Artigueños, sabres in hand, pursued and kept close at his heels; but he maintained his ground till he got to a tannery, where, espying at once a hatchet and a wall, he sprung from his pony, seized the instrument, placed his back against the parapet, and with the quickness of thought confronted his pursuers.

They also reined up, threw themselves from

their horses, and were about to rush upon Mr. Postlethwaite, when his formidable attitude, the hatchet firmly grasped in his right hand, and held aloft, his expressive countenance glowing with the fire of his younger days, made the two barbarians pause.

“Come on!” cried Postlethwaite, “come on you cowardly dogs! and *take* from me the two dollars which you just now demanded; but let the first who approaches prepare to have his skull cleft with this hatchet!”

The men at first stood petrified, while Mr. Postlethwaite brandished his hatchet in the air, and waved it over his head. They were next preparing to sneak off, when they were suddenly surrounded by some other men, who began to lay their sabres lustily over the shoulders of the freebooters, and then carried them off as prisoners. The fact is, that the pursuit of Mr. Postlethwaite having been witnessed by some of the townspeople, they ran to the barracks and gave information of it to the commanding officer; and this personage fearing that an Englishman, well known to the Protector Artigas, could not be injured without a heavy responsibility falling upon himself, instantly mounted his horse, and,

with his little escort, hastened to the relief of our courageous friend, arriving in time to inflict summary and well deserved punishment on the two aggressors.

I need scarcely add, that if Mr. Postlethwaite was before esteemed by the better class of Corrientinos, he was respected by all after this display of his undaunted nature; for in Corrientes, as in most other parts of the globe, bravery unalloyed by cruelty could not fail to command the admiration of the community at large.

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER V.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Corrientes Hucksters—And a harangue about them—South American Hospitality— A Corrientes Levee.

London, 1842.

THE morning after my arrival I awoke at a very early hour, and as I lay wondering where I was and endeavouring to collect my scattered thoughts,—for so, after a tumultuous scene of action, and sudden change of place and of persons, with much hurry and excitement of feeling, all people do when they awake in the morning and find themselves *in a strange bed and strange bed-room*,—after I had looked at the curtains, and drawn them aside to look at the window, and as I was just beginning to get a clue to the events of yesterday, some shrill voices broke upon my ear, and they every moment augmented in strength and number. Listening to catch their various exclamations, I was not a little surprised to hear the following curious announcements from a great

number of urchins who, I found, had congregated at the front door.

“Salt for candles!” cried one.

“Tobacco for bread!” called out another.

“Yerba for eggs!” chimed in a third.

“Tomàtés for sugar!” bawled a fourth.

In this way a dozen boys and girls offered potatoes for starch, wood for flour, segars for soap, greens for blue, butter for pepper, sausages for oil, milk for vinegar, with, in the shape of *quid pro quo*, every other conceivable and inconceivable culinary and household provision which the heterogeneous wants of the Correntinos and Correntinas could bring into competition in the way of barter.

Those cries, I must observe, were mixed with others of a still greater number of boys who called a variety of articles, but all “for money:” eggs for money, candles for money, milk for money, &c.

I hastened to the door, and found that all the children were ready with the articles they offered, each having his or her basket or bundle ready to exchange for their equivalents with the inmates of the house. Such was the primitive mode in which, on our arrival, we found that the daily wants of the people were mutually supplied,—I mean by

barter ; for we ourselves gradually introduced the use of money in our domestic economy, preferring this easy manner of supplying our wants to the more elaborate process of keeping a chandler's shop in our kitchen.

Yet it was to the great scandal of the respectable old ladies of Corrientes that we thus innovated on their ancient and much favoured custom of barter. It was, at the commencement of our sojourn among them, the great and only objection they had against us. The specie, however, which we went on introducing into the province, and the increasing prosperity which it engendered, not only diminished by degrees their regret for the removal of their time-hallowed system of barter, but reconciled them to the use of the representative metals for the procuring of their household wants.

But I remember before this change of feeling towards us took place, that at a party given by our friend Don Ysidoro Martinez (to be hereafter honourably mentioned), the subject of barter having been brought on the *tapis*, his wife drew herself up with all the stateliness of a Corrientes female aristocrat, and then with much emphasis

and great deliberation pronounced the following harangue:—

“ If I were the lady governor of the province I would banish all these Englishmen from the country ; for they have entirely ruined and destroyed our commerce. Before they arrived here, the poor people were content to come to our doors and to say ‘ bread for yerba,’ ‘ segars for sugar !’ and then indeed we had good bargains, and the lower classes knew their own places, and behaved themselves with submission and humility to their superiors. But these times are gone,—or at least they are fast passing away. Now we can scarcely get anything but for money. The women send to our doors their tiresome brats, who scream out ‘ bread for money,’ ‘ candles for money ;’ and on being driven away, they insolently call out, ‘ Let us go to the Englishmen, they give us money for everything !’ It is thus that these Englishmen ruin our trade and innovate upon our customs ; and it is for this that, were I governor, I should banish them from the province.”

There is in South America, as well as in Spain, a strict regard paid to the old fashioned rules of

etiquette, the effect of which would often produce a feeling of the ridiculous in the minds of a business-loving people like the English, were it not evident that such attention to ceremony springs from genuine hospitality and kindness of heart. When the Spaniard calls upon you as a stranger, and tells you that he has come "to place his house at your disposal," it may not be, and it is not, literally true, that he means you to take his house to yourself; but in the widest acceptance of the phrase, it is his intention that you should act upon his offer. It means that he keeps open house for you,—that he and his family will be pleased to see you, to entertain you, and to render you all the little services which kindness can suggest and hospitality carry into effect. Such, at any rate, is my impression of this part of South American character; and it is but just to add that this pleasing trait in the colonist is strictly inherited from his progenitor of the mother country.

This digressional view of a national trait in the Spanish people is suggested to me by a recollection of the sort of levee which assembled in our house during the two days which succeeded that of my arrival in Corrientes,—a second edition of

the ceremony with which my brother, two months before, had been greeted on his return from Paraguay.

Towards eleven o'clock the first day, the élite of the place began to arrive. They were dressed out, ladies and gentlemen, for the occasion, and they entered the sala or drawing-room with grave and formal salutations enough, but with many words of kind and hearty greeting. Chairs were placed round the room, and maté and wine, sweetmeats and segars were handed to the visitors as they came in. Some of the ladies brought *mulatillas*, little female slaves, with them; and these either remained at the door, looking in upon the company, or if very young, squatted at their mistress's feet in the room.

There was the governor, our kind friend Mendez, decked out in his best uniform, accompanied by his aid-de-camp, who kept close by his side, and his *ordenanza*, who stood at the street door holding the governor's horse : then came Don Ysidoro Martinez, one of the finest specimens possible of the urbane and educated old Spaniard, with his stately Correntina wife and her *mulatilla*. Next entered Don Pedro Campbell,

of whose altered and polished appearance we must speak by-and-by. In danced after him our gay French friend Perichon, with his wife, Doña Pastora, who, forgetful that this was a visit of etiquette, ran up to me, and embracing me, exclaimed, "Báéh! baeh picó! it is he himself!" Then came the *alcalde de primer voto*, or lord mayor, in a court dress, and very long gold-headed cane, and with him two or three other members of the municipality. Following them came Dr. Cossio, the first, and what was better, the most honest of the Corrientes judges; and so, pouring in one after another, came the Velausteguis, the Rolones, the Madariagas, the Escobars,—in short, all the great people of Corrientes, to the English *Besamanos*.

As the crowd of visitors increased, so did the noise of tongues: and by degrees the freezing point of etiquette was thawed down by the softening influence of conversation and refreshments. The gentlemen talked loud and gesticulated amazingly, while the ladies, laying aside the Spanish language, resorted to their more favourite Guarani, and forming into little coteries, they so chattered together, each clamouring for attention to her own

voluble discourse, that it became quite impossible to make a suitable acknowledgment to any one individual for the kind things which every one was clearly in the act of expressing.

These visits, however, made us forthwith at home with every respectable family in Corrientes; and it was delightful to my brother and myself to find ourselves once more among a kind and hospitable people, who, though frightened by the inroads of Artigas's soldiery, were not scared by the constant presence, nor chilled into silence by the frightful espionage, of a systematic tyrant like Francia. The disturbances at Corrientes had more the character of the inroads of one troop of marauders after another; and a fortnight of pillage was generally followed by some months of breathing-time and rest. The poor governor, Mendez, had neither the desire to be a tyrant nor the power to become a dictator. He was content to govern with humble sway, and to exercise a kindly one under the auspices, but seldom under the immediate surveillance of General Artigas.

Yours, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER VI.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

More of the Irish Gaucho, Don Pedro Campbell—His proposals, and enterprising character—His squire, Don Edwardo—The two are dispatched to re-organize the “camp,” or country—Prospect of their success.

London, 1842.

UNDER the circumstances mentioned in the preceding letters, my brother and myself once more turned our views to the realizing of our property and the leaving the interior of South America, at any rate for Buenos Ayres, where a more civilized policy, a British frigate, the vicinity to a large naval force at Rio de Janeiro, and a fast-increasing community of our own countrymen, rendered a residence more agreeable and more secure.

We were in this project much assisted by the Irish Gaucho, Don Pedro Campbell. In illustration of the curious way in which he became naturalized, and acquired authority among the inhabitants, especially in the “*Camp*,” as he always called the country; and in order to show

forth some of the changes effected in different parts of South America by the revolution, as well as the traffic, manners, and habits of the natives, I purpose in this, and perhaps a subsequent letter or two, to give you a sketch of our establishment at Corrientes, where I resided for about a year. My brother will speak more particularly of Goya, a port or an inlet of the river Paraná, fifty-two leagues below Corrientes, and where he had the management of our affairs. We kept up a constant intercourse by a regular courier named Leyva, in our own exclusive employment, and who always performed, as we did often, the distance on horseback in one day. It was a laborious day's work, and was never attempted but by those who were inured to hard riding, and to great bodily fatigue.

To return, however, to Don Pedro Campbell. While one day considering with my brother the best mode of procedure, in walked our Irish friend, but no longer a Gaucho, at least in his dress. He was attired in a blue coat with yellow buttons, something the worse for wear it is true. It might have come from Monmouth-street, for aught I know; but still it was a coat with skirts and yellow buttons, and that was something in Corrientes,

where people wear only jackets, except on "dias de fiesta," or holidays, on visits of ceremony, and at high mass. A man there wearing a coat every day of the week, which some in spite of the heat are foolish enough to do, is designated "hombre de casaca," that is, a man with a coat, which means sometimes a genteel fellow, and sometimes a great personage.

Don Pedro's blue coat was surmounted by a large straw hat, with a blue ribbon round it to show that he was a patriot; and through a button-hole was drawn an order composed of a tricoloured ribbon, presented to him by Artigas for his prowess in various actions. Round his neck he had a yellow cotton handkerchief not over new, and his white waistcoat and shirt were bidding fair to be soon as yellow as the cravat. He was shaved in such sort as to show you that the operation had been performed not an hour before, and upon a face by no means daily accustomed either to the polish of the razor, or to the process of ablution.

The transformed man wore velveteen shorts and top boots made of materials of his own tanning. He retained his ear-rings, and made some display of a watch and seal, with, as the only observable

part of Gaucho attire, a scarlet sash tied round his waist, to serve instead of braces.

He was followed by his page Edwardo, who, occasionally in company with his master, and occasionally at a little distance behind, showed him as much respect as was compatible with the intimacy and mutual freedom of their more private hours. But Edwardo retained his Gaucho attire, by which I understood there must be a tacit agreement between Don Pedro and him, that the squire was never to presume to be, like the master, an "hombre de casaca." Of the half aid-de-camp, half servant's equipment, part was a large cavalry sabre dangling by his side, and which, clanking on the corridor, was aided in the fearful notice it gave of its approach, by the rowels of the Anglicano-Spanish Gaucho's spurs. You could not say of him as Homer of Apollo:—

"Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένητ' ἀργυριοιο βιονο,"

But you might have said of his weapon,

"Let this his sword report what speech forbears."

When Don Pedro and his equerry arrived, there were several gentlemen of some note in Corrientes chatting with us by the aid, as usual, of their segars

and of some moistening accompaniment. They all rose up, and with apparent cordiality shook hands with Don Pedro. I thought it only proper after what I had heard and seen to show him the same attention, which he acknowledged with a respectful, though not a very graceful bow, instead of his usual slap on the shoulder to his Correntino friends. No sooner had they retired than Don Pedro dismissed Edwardo, and then assuming a serious and important look, he addressed my brother and myself in the terms I am about to state. I take the liberty of encroaching on his orthography, for though it was very amusing to us, it might not be very intelligible to our readers, being, as it was, an unequivocal outrage, not only upon Spanish, but on the indelible remains of an Irish brogue.

“ You see, gentlemen,” said Don Pedro then, “ the disturbed state in which the camp (still meaning the country) is. I know you have the control of a large property here, and that you are endeavouring to convert it into produce to take to Buenos Ayres ; but you will never get all you want till you employ my services, and command my humble abilities. There is not an estanciero that has the liver (such was indeed his

expression), to go to his own estate; peep out of his own window; slaughter one of his own animals; carry ten dollars in his pocket; take time to sip a *mâté*, or venture to light a *segar* after dusk, unless he knows I am out in the camp to protect him. Nor is there a Gaucho among them, white livered rascals as they are, who dares, knowing I *am* out on your business, to interfere with it. Therefore let me go out and scour the camp with your money, carried by Edwardo, and I promise you that in a year the hides of fifty thousand bullocks and one hundred thousand horses shall be sent here or to Goya. I don't want much salary. I like the occupation. Give me twelve hundred dollars a year* for myself and Edwardo, and I am your man. I want nothing for my expenditure either in food or horses: my friends are ever too happy to see me to admit of any remuneration for either."

Here we objected that the large waggons, which afforded the only means of transport for so large a quantity of produce, had all been dismantled by Artigas, and were now unfit for use.

"That they have been dismantled by Pèpe," replied the undaunted Gaucho, "is so much the

* About 250*l.* sterling.

better ; for they lie strewed over the whole country ; nobody thinks of claiming or using them, and by the purchase of a thousand draft oxen, and the employment of a dozen carpenters, I will set every one of them in motion, upon their wheels, for Goya or Corrientes."

I could not help thinking what an excellent commissary-general such a man would make, and I regretted that he had not chanced to be employed, in that capacity, under his Grace the Duke of Wellington.

We told Campbell we should take time to consider of his proposal ; and finding upon mature inquiry that he was the only man in the country likely to execute so arduous an undertaking, we closed with him in a few days. He was once more in his Gaucho attire ; he had a numerous relay of horses ; and, followed by Edwardo, with half a dozen of Artigas's worst looking soldiers as peons, all with alforjas, or saddle-bags, some containing doubloons and dollars, others various sorts of merchandize, Don Pedro bade adieu for a season to Corrientes, and took to his favourite occupation of "cutting the camp." He first, however, roused from

their lethargy or timidity a dozen of the richest of the estancieros or cattle proprietors, with whom he galloped off on the project of reorganizing their estates, and slaughtering their cattle.

Nobody seemed to have any doubt of the Irishman's success; he himself, least of all; and as I saw him hallooing on his troop amid whirlwinds of dust and sand, I could not but think what capital elements of success in all enterprizes, small as well as great, are self-confidence and self-possession.

Here was a stranger, a foreigner, in a land lawlessly governed, and infested by banditti, setting off upon the enterprize, in fact, of restoring tranquillity to the country; and with as little doubt of success, as if he had had at his nod all Artigas's power, and all Artigas's troops.

How he succeeded you shall learn anon. How he succeeded at all has been a matter of wonderment even to me, not unaccompanied by the conviction that however distracted by faction, or abused by vicious rulers, there is in the South Americans a pliant docility of character which, whenever the selfish views of their leaders shall give way to the public good, may be easily and successfully bent to

every essential purpose of good government, founded in obedience and submission to wise and salutary laws.

Yours, &c.,

J. P. R.

LETTER VII.

THE AUTHORS to GENERAL MILLER.

Origin of Corrientes, and of its Inhabitants—Their high pretensions to descent from the best Spanish nobility—Reflections—Passion Week—Penitentes—Doña Florinda, the Corrientes Maniac.

ALTHOUGH in our former volumes we incidentally gave a slight sketch of Corrientes, its scenery, and some of its inhabitants, individually, yet from our short residence there, as mere birds of passage to or from Paraguay, it was not to be expected that we should analyze very minutely the peculiar habits of the people at large ; nor did we pretend to do so. But now that we had obtained a local habitation and a name among the Correntinos, we had time and opportunity to remark more closely upon them. We found ourselves in the midst of a community, primitive in its origin like that of Paraguay, come of the same original stock, and yet marked with those distinctive features which shade off country from country, and province from province,—rendering them, like the human countenance, all alike, yet each having its own peculiar features : but while we must leave to the deeper speculations of

the psychologist an inquiry into the invisible and mysterious circumstances which gradually give separate habits, customs, tones, nay even looks, not to nations only, but to circumjacent provinces, we shall content ourselves with bringing before our readers some of the characteristic traits of the Correntinos, which appeared to us to be amusing or instructive, as compared with those which we have observed in other communities.

It is the boast of the inhabitants of Corrientes, and particularly of the female part, that their city was the first founded in the River Plate. It is certain that the Spaniards, when they discovered that great stream, ascended it in search of "*El Dorado*," without, in the first instance, founding a city near its mouth, where Buenos Ayres now stands. They only left a small colony, which was afterwards destroyed by the Indians, and the main expedition proceeded up the majestic Rio de la Plata as far as Corrientes and Paraguay.

At the former point a settlement was immediately commenced, and the Correntinas say that all the *noble blood* of Spain which the expedition comprised, remained at Corrientes. From those nobles, accordingly, they trace their high

descent. They look with sovereign contempt on the people of Buenos Ayres as upstarts, and of a low and mongrel breed; and many a Correntina dame have we seen drawing herself up very majestically when comparing *her* progenitors with those of the Porteños.

We may, probably, trace to this high estimate of their pedigree, and of the purity of their blood, the more primitive state of society in Corrientes than even in other places farther removed from the capital of the country and central point of its civilization. For the Correntinos,—and more particularly, as we have hinted, the softer part of the creation there,—looked down from their high places with disdain on their parvenu rivals. Any admixture, accordingly, of the gaieties, frivolities, and new fashions of the capital, was regarded as a contamination of those pure, unsullied manners which they had derived from their noble and illustrious ancestors.

Many of their customs and usages were, indeed, of a kind which have become obsolete in a refined society like that of England; but while we pronounce upon those who are behind us in the career of civilization, let us never forget that the main

difference lies, not in the nature of the being, but in the comparative state of knowledge ; of moral and religious principles ; of the arts, sciences, and general education, which prevail. These are the acquirements which tend to modify, ameliorate, raise, and dignify man in society. At the same time, history teaches us that the rise of man in the scale of civilization is progressive, beginning generally at the point of absolute barbarism, and rising by slow and painful steps to the highest reach of mental elevation. In the great career of civilization all nations have had one starting post. Some, great in their day and generation, have long since run their race, and are now as a tale that has been told. Some are struggling still to gain the winning post, and contesting the honour with others ; and some are only now setting out on their long and fatiguing course. But to every nation that course is open, and by all the goal may be reached. That place which we occupy now, may be attained hereafter by those behind us ; and on whom, *because* behind us, we are too apt to look with contempt.

It cannot be denied that we, the English, the élite, as we boast ourselves, of the family of civilization,

were at one time painted barbarians, inhabiting caves, clad in skins, offering up our oblations at the temples, a parcel of loose stones, of the druids, and receiving from these, as laws of eternal truth, all their superstitious and fanatical commands.

As little can it be denied that we derived our first elements of what was then called civilization from our Roman, and consequently heathen conquerors. Still less can it be denied that for many hundred years after we had had the benefit of their instruction, we came under the tutelage of the priests and professors of the Roman Catholic faith; that is, what, according to our forefathers, was the only true religion, but according to many of our contemporaries, the tyranny, the bigotry, and the manifold abuses of the Romish hierarchy.

That we have gained much by the Reformation is abundantly clear to every sincere and enlightened Protestant; but *how* much, it is neither our province, nor our desire here to discuss. Yet it would be bold to affirm that the Reformation has as yet brought us to the Ultima Thule of our journey: on the contrary, we think temperate men must agree with us, that, till we have laid aside the deadly amount of *odium theologicum* which we

have allowed to poison almost every spring of action we possess; till we have rendered our *practice* less obvious to reproach; and finally, till we have learned to be more charitable towards those who differ from us, and more tolerant of their opinions; we can never proclaim that we have reached the goal of perfection at which we profess to aim.

The emancipation of the human mind is, in truth, a work of no small difficulty and time; and that, whether in civilized societies, or in semi-barbarous communities. How jarring and clashing a discord is there not, even in this country, as to what is right and true in politics, religion, literature, and even morals! One book gainsays another; one paper abuses another: faction, with her jaundiced eye and malicious tongue, will allow nothing that her opponent can do or say to be right. Religion, alas! for the most beautiful gem in her crown, charity,—where is it? Wisdom, with her uplifted voice, at the corner of what street is she to be found speaking, without being contradicted at the next? The senate, the pulpit, the bar,—what convincing proofs do they not afford of our yet being at the threshold, merely, of truth?

What we mean by the preceding remarks, is to show that the Correntinos, at the time we lived among them, were only at a point in the scale, at which we once stood ; and to bespeak for them that indulgence to which an impartial reference to our own history ought to lead. The Correntinos, if you please, are children, while we have attained the stature of man's estate ; but this, so far from being a reason why we should despise them, is only one for the exercise towards them of the forbearance due by the man to the child.

These observations have been suggested by the recollection of a singular custom which we had an opportunity of witnessing in Corrientes, on Good Friday ; some account of which we now proceed to give.

Passion week in all Catholic countries, is one of such rigid fasting, obvious devotion, and lugubrious ceremonial, as invariably to attract, and often to rivet the attention of those who profess another creed.

But in a primitive community, like that of Corrientes, separated almost from intercourse with the world, long nursed in superstitious customs made inveterate by habit, and under a priestly influence,

working on the ignorance of the people; the scenes which present themselves to the traveller, are often replete with interest, as showing not only what is new to him, but demonstrating how susceptible man is of being wedded, with a tenacity strong as a second nature, to customs and observances, which, based neither upon reason nor revelation, stand simply on the authority of those who have inculcated them.

The Correntinos, it must be confessed, were far behind us; for the whole of Passion week was, (and in the literal sense of the words probably still is) with them one of sackcloth and ashes. Everything having the semblance of finery was put away by the females, and all merriment and gaiety were suppressed. With downcast eyes and brows crossed with ashes, long rosaries depending from their arms; handkerchiefs in their hands, continually applied to wipe away their tears; fasting much, and at best living upon fish and vegetable diet; they were to be seen parading the streets from morning till night, visiting all the churches, and paying their devotions at the numerous shrines of their favourite saints. Altars were stationed in the streets; and according to the importance in which

each saint was held by its special devotee, was the number of "*Ave Marias*" repeated at its altar, or of presents laid at its feet. It is incredible with what devotion these orisons were paid, and gifts offered by the inhabitants of the place, men, women, and children, during the six days of Passion week. We saw many, who having sallied from their houses at five o'clock in the morning, did not return till late in the evening, except for a morsel of broiled fish. The whole of that time they spent in the churches, and the altars, and they said their "*Ave Marias*" over and over again, till their longest string of beads was inadequate to keep for them the holy account. We saw enough to convince us that whatever might be wanting in truth or propriety, there was a superabundance of zeal and endurance, that no motive, perhaps, less enthusiastic than that of devotional fervour, could have produced or sustained.*

The solemn and funereal processions and devotions having drawn to a close, about nine o'clock in

* We pass over the account of the crucifixion and funeral of the image of Christ, as having been already given in our account of Paraguay, where the ceremony was conducted much as at Corrientes.

the evening, we returned homewards. The sermon on our Saviour's death and burial had been preached, and all Corrientes was hushed into a deep lugubrious silence. The streets were left untenanted; doors and casements were closed; no voice of mirth or revelry disturbed the solemn sadness of the night; the moon, already on the wane, was struggling with vast masses of clouds, which, now burying her under an apparently immoveable embankment, anon opened up and left a space of blue, as if to display for a moment her hidden beauty, and then gathering again around her, shrouded her once more in utter darkness; the wind moaned among the surrounding garden trees; and now and then a dog, missing all his accustomed noises, would set up a piteous howl, and "bay the moon."

We had been sitting for an hour and a half at our drawing-room window, enjoying the softness of the autumnal night in that warm region, when, towards eleven o'clock, we sent our black valet, Juan, over to our place of business, where several persons employed by us slept, to see that all was secure for the night. He had been gone, however, but a very short time when he returned,

apparently scared and terrified out of his wits. Rushing into the house, he hastily drew the bolt of the front gateway, and hastening into the room, he faintly ejaculated, "Oh, master, master, it is coming this way ; shut the window !"

As he said this, we heard the clanking of heavy chains, and presently saw four or five lanterns moved slowly along, apparently by dark figures. A party by degrees came in sight, and presented to our astonished eyes a spectacle which seemed to justify all the terror displayed by Juan, who, like ourselves, was a stranger in Corrientes. The group consisted of eight individuals. Four of them, forming a square, carried each a lantern ; three inside moved triangularly, the hinder one having a plate, sponge, jug of water, and oranges in his hand. In the centre of this triangle walked a figure closely masked, his body bare to his loins, a flowing white calico or muslin robe from that downwards, stained and besmeared with blood, his back lacerated, torn, and bleeding, his ankles encircled with heavy irons, which only enabled him to move a foot's length at a time ; and he himself, as he thus moved along, incessantly scourging his bare back with a sort of long lash,

made of untwisted cords, bringing them down on his tunic or demi-robe to clear them of the blood which at each stroke they imbibed. The profound silence which all maintained was only broken by the heavy breathing and suppressed groans of the self-constituted martyr.

We presently discovered the use of the man who walked behind the principal actor in the drama. Close to our house was a niche, with a figure of the Virgin Mary in it, surmounted by a cross. As the gyved wretch came in front of it, he heavily sunk upon his knees, and at the same moment exhausted nature, for a time, relieved him from his sufferings in a swoon. Thus reduced to insensibility, as he was reeling over, the man behind caught him up. He bathed his temples, and took other means of restoring him ; gave him an orange to suck ; assisted by the two other men he got him again on his feet ; and again, after a pause, the flagellation recommenced, and the group moved forward. We contemplated this almost unearthly exhibition with silent horror and astonishment ; and we had only time to look at each other “ unutterable things,” when our attention was again arrested by a new group which approached.

It came marshalling up precisely in the same form as the first; but the victim, in this case, was dressed in a white robe, was masked, and had a large crucifix behind him, tied tightly to his back and to his extended arms by hair ropes twisted round and round the crucifix and his body. He also was in fetters, but seemed to walk with even greater difficulty than the preceding sufferer. It was evident that the tightness of his ligatures impeded the circulation of his blood, and that in this pain we were to look for his passing martyrdom. He fainted frequently, kneeling at the niche with infinite torture, but recovered, and passed on.

A third came: attended only by two torchmen and an assistant, and masked as the preceding *crucificado*. This poor creature crawled on all fours, and his bleeding knees and hands attested the pain of the operation over rough and broken streets, here sinking into mud and sand, and there overlaid with brick bats and loose sharp stones.

But, behold, a fourth, emulating his predecessor, and not only on his hands and knees, but dragging a large stone behind him, attached to his girdle by a hide rope: and see, he is followed up by a fifth in the same attitude, with a huge iron bit in his

mouth, while one man drags him along by the reins attached to it, and another follows scourging the man-brute by his own desire. Another—but we need enumerate no more,—for really nature sickens at the sight.

Suffice it therefore to say, that twelve or fourteen of these groups passed along in horrible procession, all more or less painfully encumbered or terribly self-scourged. We guessed that these must be some desperate fanatics inflicting self-mortification and punishment, as some atonement for the deepness of their crimes and multitude of their sins; and truly our hearts recoiled within us as we contemplated, from so close a view, the revival, or rather the continuation, of the worst bodily mortifications practised by the early ascetics for the ease and cure of their souls.

Anxious to penetrate the mysteries of the procession, we were hastening next morning to the house of our friend Don Ysidoro Martinez, when there came into the drawing-room, *sans ceremonie*, a female, who was a remarkable specimen of slight mental aberration, exhibiting, with all the traits of a crazed imagination, many lucid intervals of shrewdness and self-possession. Her wander-

ings were often affecting ; but, considered abstractedly, they were always interesting from this,—that while they showed forth, in the broadest relief, because familiar, natural, unrestrained, and undisguised, the manners of a Correntina, they led, philosophically speaking, to the consideration of how much even the maniac's peculiarities are modified by habit, country, manners, and by education ; or, if you will, by the want of it. A Correntina maniac is no more like an English maniac than the manners of Corrientes are like those of this country. There, all is untutored simplicity, combined with a familiarity and *nonchalance*, which would not be tolerated in what is here called “society.” It would be deemed, in fashionable phraseology, “monstrous.”

The name of the lady in question was Doña Florinda, and something of her history you will find in the letter following this. The present one we shall bring to a close with one farther reflection on the different scenes which we witnessed on Good Friday.

As the only Protestants present, we could not but consider with what different eyes from those who surrounded us we viewed the passing events.

It is only by contrasting and comparing national manners that we can detect their blemishes, absurdities, laxities, and contradictions. When we see so many points in the manners of another nation, which to our eyes are full of the ridiculous, or are tainted with a deeper sin, and yet which, by the people themselves, instead of being so viewed, are either looked on with reverence, or defended and upheld as rational and correct, we are forced into the conviction that we must at home be scanned in many things with the same keen and more clear-sighted vision than our own ; and that, consequently, we must often be seen to uphold as right, what is, in itself, the growth of prejudice, or ignorance, or bigotry, or of all the three. Fortunately for the preservation of such customs, though not so much so for the enlightenment of new generations, these usages come down to us as " Time hallowed observances," and be they ever so absurd, they are too often, under that denomination, safe from the shears of innovation.

Yours, &c.

THE AUTHORS.

LETTER VIII.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Doña Florinda's person, character, and habits—The cause and result of her aberrations—Her exulting account of the Penitentes, contrasted with that of Don Ysidoro—The real state of the case.

DOÑA FLORINDA, the lady of whom, in their last letter, the authors have spoken, was of one of the best families in the country. She was about thirty-five years of age and fair complexioned, but she had aided these years in obliterating a portion of her original beauty by a perpetual recurrence to fine brown snuff. Her box was seldom out of her hand. She halted on one leg, and therefore used a stout cane for her support, while the efforts she made to conceal her infirmity, told distinctly how little she liked (how little does the very *wisest* of us like?) to be marked by any unseemly peculiarity, which takes from us, or mars the shape, limb, or features of common humanity. This failing in Doña Florinda was not a Correntino failing; it was only one of those general weaknesses

of frail mortality, which neither time, place, nor education can eradicate, or even modify.

The lady in question was a friend of both my brother and myself. Of the former indeed, she was a professed admirer. Her visits to us, accordingly, were more frequent on the few occasions when he came from Goya, and it was not less amusing to hear her frank declarations of love for the one, than her earnest protestations of friendship for the other. Her tongue never stopped for a moment, even while she was taking snuff,—an aliment as essential to her existence as the air which she breathed,—a companion—more necessary even to her than the staff upon which, sitting, standing, or walking, she leaned for support.

Poor Doña Florinda, with a susceptible heart and weak head, had, early in life, been taken in the meshes of the fickle and relentless god.

A Correntino swain had caught her eye and captivated her affections,—had promised her marriage,—had seduced and deserted her. The grief of her heart was too much for her head;—reason gave way, but leaving still the remembrance of her fatal passion, she substituted many a subsequent youth as the ideal lover for the false one who had betrayed

her, and of whom she appeared only to think, as he had appeared in his more ardent moments, personified by the swain of her choice for the present hour. When she was not wrapped up in a love vision, she took snuff as her only solace, and when her heart *was* on the flutter, and herself in the company of her often changed lover, she still took snuff to increase the excitement. Doña Florinda became the gossip of the town, and was a perfect treasure house of stories on the tender passion; dreams, fancies, adventures and romances. She was particularly fond of the convents and the friars; and when she had nothing better to say, she was always saying her Ave Maria. She used to be waiting at the church doors before they were open, to hear the first morning mass; she carried alms about to the poor, and though fond of tawdry finery, always laid it aside when she went to her devotions. Many were the efforts she made to convert my brother and myself to the true faith, offering, as the recompense of reward, to marry either of us, if we would only be joined to her in the bands of the Catholic Church.

This devotee of love and religion called as we were going to make our inquiries about the pro-

cession. She seemed more than usually joyful and complacent, and without returning my salutation of good morning, she limped nimbly up the steps of the corridor, walked hastily into the room, and "Ah, Señor Don Juan," said she, "ha visto vmd à los penitentes." (Ah! Mr. Robertson, you have seen the penitents.)

"Yes I have," replied I. "Yes, yes," she returned, as she struck the floor repeatedly with her stick, in evident joy and triumph; and from the snuff-box which she held between the forefinger and thumb of her cane hand, she took a hearty pinch of snuff with her other.

"I know, I know it all," continued Doña Florinda. "I helped to cook the supper in the convent of San Francisco last night for the padres and the penitents. Pai Quintana, (father Quintana,) when I was putting down the sweetmeats, told me that he had desired one of the torchbearers to observe as he passed your house, whether you were looking on or not; for surely, as the Pai himself said, such a sight must have made a great impression both upon yourself and (here she sighed) my dear Don Guillermo."

"Well, Doña Florinda," I replied, "if the

Pai's object was to astonish us, he completely attained it, for never in our lives was a deeper impression made upon us."

"Are you ready then," she said, clasping her hands, and turning her eyes to heaven, "are you ready to come to the bosom of holy mother church?"

"Not quite," said I, "especially until you explain to me how it is that on Good Friday, the very day of the crucifixion, when all are fasting, praying, crying, the friars and penitents were at supper, with sweetmeats to boot."

"Cristo!" she ejaculated, "lo que puede la ignorancia! Dios de mi vida! ten compasion y paciencia con el alma de este pobre hombre!" (Jesu Maria! What ignorance he displays! Blessed Virgin Mary be patient, and have compassion on the soul of this poor man.)

"Well, Doña Florinda," said my brother, "do you, in the meantime, have compassion on our ignorance, and explain to us what, with that same ignorance, appears to us at present to be a mystery."

"Señores," she replied, "did not you see the martirio (martyrdom) which those servants of God

underwent last night for the love of their Saviour? Do you not know that though the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak? And how was it possible that they should be all but crucified, without receiving good nourishment both before and afterwards?

“ Yes, Señores mios, they ate, they drank in spite of the general order of the Rubric, and, God be praised, I saw every one who attended the procession, but particularly the penitents, eat and drink to their heart’s content, before they went to bed. Now do you understand? Each of the penitents received, moreover, a reward from the convents, and if you consider that the martyrs were forty days in confinement, fasting and praying before the procession, as well as what they suffered under it, you will not think either the reward unmerited, or the feast of last night too sumptuous. All this, however, would have gone but a small way to induce the penitents to endure their martyrdom, unless it had been agreed that a hundred masses were to be said for the soul of each of them. Oh! adorable penitents! would to God that I stood in their shoes! ”

Here Doña Florinda broke out into a hysterical laugh,—the precursor, generally, of her worst mo-

ments of endurance,—of the sad interval between the expiring rays of reason and the dreary night of mental alienation.

I ran to the house of her relations, which was near our own, and in a few minutes the maniac was conveyed to the solitary chamber in which she was wont to be kept, till temporary derangement was superseded by returning consciousness and self possession.

Poor Doña Florinda's aberrations were of the most harmless kind,—not Sterne's Maria was less to be feared. Her sober moments were all moments of innocent chatter, those of her alienations all of pitiable, incoherent, but still characteristic and harmless display; and it was consolatory to consider that, on the whole, she enjoyed more of playful recreation and childish pleasure, than falls generally to the lot of poor care-worn humanity.

Not satisfied with Doña Florinda's account of the penitentes, we opened up the subject, on our Easter-day visit of etiquette, to Don Ysidoro Martinez, from whom we got a very different edition of the story. He was much amused with the fright which our man Juan got in the street, in the first place; and he was next very merry at our expense on learning the horror, fear, and dread

with which we had subsequently, and with closed doors, looked out upon the procession as it passed. He assured us that if we had gone out and inspected the penitentes and their attendants a little more closely, we should have discovered some well known faces among the crew. "In fact, gentlemen," added Don Ysidoro, "the procession of the penitentes is a matter so common place here, that we take it for granted it is familiar to every one, and hence the silence on the subject on the part of myself as well as of others, which has appeared so strange to you.

"But," continued our friend more seriously, "this annual procession is a deep disgrace to our town, and it is one of those things which give so easy a handle to the enemies of our religion for ridicule of its precepts, and scoffing and scorning of its practices. The whole thing is a scandalous abuse, which has been put down by the higher authorities of the church in every part, save this, of South America ; and it is to be hoped that neither can it here much longer survive. It is repudiated and reprobated by all the better class here ; and it is really in great part kept up from the fear of

a popular disturbance among the lower classes, should this their own peculiar procession be abolished. In point of fact, the present venerable Bishop of Paraguay, happening to pass through Corrientes at this very season, when he was on his way to take possession of his bishopric, heard of the procession, and, scandalized by its nature and objects, he issued a mandate* prohibiting for ever the display. But such was the rage of the *canaille* of the town when they heard of the mandate, that they rose *en masse*, surrounded the house where the bishop lodged, and threatened him with instant personal violence if he did not revoke the obnoxious decree. The poor bishop was obliged so to do, and was glad to escape from an infuriated mob to the more civilized city of Assumption, where such periodical outrage on humanity as the one in question does not exist.

“ The mode of getting up the procession is this : A number of women of the lowest class, the great upholders of this custom, seconded in an underhand manner, I am sorry to say, by some of the less scrupulous brethren of the convents, who find

* The Bishop of Paraguay was diocesan of Corrientes.

their account in the abuse, look out at the commencement of Lent, for the penitentes, generally twelve to fifteen or twenty in number. They are taken from the dregs of society, for only such as are dead to all shame will consent to walk, and they are fed and treated through Lent, to prepare them for the sufferings of the procession. They also receive donations of money and presents. At the appointed time they are gathered together at the convent of San Francisco, where all is prepared for their respective penitencies, such as you saw; and thence, cheered on by their patrons and patronesses, they set out in procession. Those who are to inflict self flagellation have a card, used for carding wool, smartly applied to their backs, so as to draw blood with all its fine points, and the application of the lash keeps up the bleeding, without causing much pain. They walk round the town, are then put to bed, tended and nursed till they are well, and so dismissed. Some of them suffer but little, others severely; and on occasions when the weather has been sharp, death has ensued. But this is always hushed up, and as those who die richly deserve their fate, they are not at all commiserated. Indeed, it is looked on as a proof

of the penitente being game, and entitled to high admiration on that account."

Such was Don Ysidoro's statement of the real nature of the penitents' procession.

I am, &c.,

J. P. R.

LETTER IX.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

The population of Corrientes—Classes of inhabitants—Productions
 —The learned prior and dinners in the refectory—Don Ysidoro
 Martinez y Cires—Don Agustin Saenz and his polacca—
 Smuggling—The way of endowing brides.

THE population of Corrientes, in character and class, was pretty much like that of Assumption, as described in Letter XXIII., Vol. i., of the Letters on Paraguay; but the number of inhabitants, as we have already remarked, did not exceed 5000 to 6000 in the town, or rather, as by royal decree it was styled, “The noble and very loyal city of Saint John of the Seven Currents.” The whole province, after the depopulation of the Missions, did not contain above 50,000 souls. The pursuits and habits of the people were almost entirely pastoral; for though the country is fertile in the highest degree, abounds in the finest timber, and is irrigated by many noble streams, yet, with the exception of the immediate vicinity of the town itself,

and of some of the principal villages, not a vestige of cultivation is to be seen.

It would seem that the general progress of society is in the following order :—

1st. Comes your savage ;

2dly. Comes your shepherd ;

3dly. Your agriculturist ;

4thly. Your landlord receiving rent ;

And, lastly, your manufacturer, artist, author, man of science, &c.

You can *dele* or alter this programme as you like, while I proceed to say that thousands upon thousands of horses and cattle covered the plains and filled the woods of the province of Corrientes ; and yet not till you came within a few miles of the capital could you form the slightest idea that cotton, tobacco, the sugar cane, maize, mandioca, bananas, oranges, grapes, and many esculent herbs are all the natural and valuable growth of the soil. On the Misiones portion of the territory the yerba is excellent, and grows in abundance, while the cochineal is found in considerable perfection, and the indigo plant in many directions. Rice is also a production of the country : coffee could be cultivated to advantage, and wild honey is found in

luxuriant plenty. The finest milk and cream I ever tasted was in Corrientes. It is a land flowing with milk and honey.

Its inhabitants were simple and kind-hearted; but with the exception of two or three lawyers, half a dozen old Spaniards, and a very few Creoles, there was not, in the general population, the remotest pretension to learning or erudition. The great mass of the lower classes were unable to write, and a large proportion could not read. Some of the clergy and friars had an inkling of Latin; but a really classical book, or one prohibited by the Inquisition, was rarely to be found in any library. By a bribe to the custom-house officers, I was enabled to introduce my heretical books; and once placed on my shelves, so far from any desire to scrutinize them, there was an evident reluctance, expressive at once of ignorance and distrust, to look near them.

The most learned prior of all the convents took down one day from my shelves a Testament in the Vulgate, from which he read several texts, in evident surprise that I understood them, and delight that we were agreed as to their meaning. Through this good, but not erudite, padre, I got an intro-

duction to all the convents, and had two or three times the honour of dining with their inmates in the refectory.

I sent, on such occasions, some European wine and English porter to the "mess;" and though I tried to believe that I was asked to their entertainments for my own sake, and though most willing to acknowledge their bountiful hospitality, I will not take it upon me to adjust the precise ratio in which, in this case, hospitality stood to the personal gratification arising from a draught of bottled stout, or a bumper of golden sherry. Certain it is that the friars, considering their avocation, were sufficiently fond of both. They visited me often, and a great advantage that I derived from their acquaintance was, that all the time I remained in Corrientes, with my prohibited books, not attending mass, nor paying anything for masses, I was so far from being molested, that the community looked up to me with respect, in consequence of seeing me on an intimate footing with one or two of their principal priests. And I have great pleasure in saying, that some of these were most agreeable, and all of them very tolerant, men: not tolerant, perhaps, so much from religious prin-

ciple, as from a sense of what was due to a stranger who hospitably entertained them, and showed no inclination to trouble them with polemical discussions. I wish I could see a good deal of the same sort of toleration, not only in England, but all over the world. In cases where I see *not* this toleration, my inward exclamation is,—“ Who art *thou*, oh man, that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

There was living at Corrientes, at the time I was there, one of the very best specimens I had seen in South America of an old Spaniard. His name, already mentioned, was Don Ysidoro Martinez y Cires. In his manners, deportment, language, and general courtesy, he was, I think, as finished a gentleman of the old school as I ever knew; the very essence of every thing graceful, amiable, and polite. He was not only a good scholar (speaking in the Spanish sense of that word), but there was in his conversation a playfulness, a naïveté, and a wit, albeit with the admixture of a little self-complacency, that made his society delightful. But, more pleasing still, he was a benevolent, open-hearted, and generous man: placable in his resent-

ments, warm and steady in his friendships. He had been, during the Spanish sway, quite the leading man in Corrientes; and even after that sway was at an end, I never heard of his having been distressed, insulted, or robbed by any of the freebooters that for some years had been in the habit of laying Corrientes under lawless contribution. They were content to take what he gave voluntarily, and he was too wise thus to act, rather than annul the tacit understanding.

There appeared to be a halo drawn around his virtue, good sense, uprightness, and generosity, within which even plunder and rapine hesitated to show their dark forms.

Don Ysidoro was the only man in Corrientes who had a good general library, although, of course, exclusively a Spanish one. Much of the little I know of the literature of that country, I owe to his books, and to his sagacious, if not always comprehensive, comments and criticisms upon them; while many of his letters which I have in my possession I deem to be perfect models of Spanish epistolary excellence.

Don Ysidoro had been a large landed proprietor and merchant; but with a sagacity peculiar to

him, and exhibiting a wonderful contrast to the blind and headlong anticipations of his countrymen, he saw at once the object, and anticipated the results, of the South American revolution. He drew in his horns, gave up his pretensions to superiority, sold his estates, disposed of his goods, embarked the greater part of his property for England, and, retained by one sole motive in Corrientes, viz., his wife's partiality for the place, and her connexion with many of the principal families in it, the sagacious and philosophic Spaniard sat down to enjoy himself in his study, now with his book, which he could thoroughly relish; now with his pen, which he wielded with grace and dexterity; and not only avowing, but maintaining, a determined and steady abstraction from political and even commercial affairs. His impartiality was so well known, his integrity so undoubted, that the most adverse and bitter parties were content to leave their causes to his sole arbitration. Never did I hear of any of the courts, when his sentence (as rarely happened) was appealed from, reversing or annulling his decision: so that, *de facto*, Don Ysidoro, though a Spaniard, disliked, *as such*, by the governors of the country, came to be practi-

cally, and especially in those most important cases which regulate and control disputes between man and man, a much more important personage than any judge in the land. He was a welcome guest with both Spaniards and Creoles; a perfect regulator and controller of the affairs of many private families; and, like my friend Don Gregorio de la Cerda, the compadre (as having stood godfather for their children) of most of the élite. Even in Corrientes they had their élite society; but I never knew a man there or elsewhere controlling such society, without some substantial claims to superiority. These claims, in Don Ysidoro's case, were acknowledged by friends and foes.

I used often to dine with him, and met at his house the liberal governor, and the prejudiced friar, the hearty estanciero, the lawyer, and the man in civic authority, the stranger just welcomed to the town, and the numerous relatives of his own spouse. Elegance of manners and refinement, according to our estimate, I certainly found but little; and even that little was owing to the high example and bland manners of the master of the house.

His wife, a lofty and prejudiced Correntina, was

under his gentle control, so were the friars, and so were the democratic leaders of the revolution, as well as their avowed enemies, the old Spaniards. Wonderful was the influence of Don Ysidoro's combined powers of talent, good sense, and philanthropy. They seemed to still the waves of discord, and to evoke out of the jarring elements of political strife and civil broil all their noxious ingredients. Accordingly, although the best society of Corrientes was but indifferent in its general composition, yet, under Don Ysidoro's talismanic management, it was often very agreeable. He had a quick insight into all the prejudices of the Correntinos; but he winked at them all. On occasions when I have been with him, and a remark rather outré has been made, or a theory somewhat untenable broached, an intelligent twinkle from his bright eye forewarned me of the utter hopelessness of controversy.

But what pleased me most was to accompany him on his frequent visits to the lower classes of society. Everybody in South America, no matter what his station in life, has a natural *nonchalance* and independence of manner about him that would wonderfully perplex and surprise the aris-

tocracy of this realm. Our peasant, in presence of the landlord or patron, is what in Scotland would be called "a real doofie." In South America, no such thing: the poorest man there knows he can neither starve nor be taken to a workhouse, the very name of which is unknown in the country. But there were many ways in which Don Ysidoro proved himself the friend and benefactor of his poor neighbours,—many little wants to supply, sickness to heal, sorrows to alleviate, strife to compose,—and he did all with such grace, such urbanity, or rather familiarity, of manner, that his ready joke, his glee, and his habitual good humour never shone out so brightly as when seated on a rude hide chair, or on the front of a hide bedstead, in one of the poor cottages of which he visited so many.

Don Ysidoro had a special crony of the name of Martinez Saenz, owner and commander of a fine polacca. In the course of his frequent passages to and from Buenos Ayres, he brought, for the purpose of regaling his particular friends, large supplies of Scotch ale and brown stout. It were not easy to convince you what luxuries these are (if now, indeed, they have them) in Corrientes. Iced

champagne in the heat of summer here, conveys but a feeble idea of the refreshing delights of a draught, on the banks of the Paraná, of that "stout" which fashion here has degraded to the rank of mere kitchen beverage.

To Captain Saenz's polacca, in the cool of the evening, Don Ysidoro and I often repaired to quaff our libations of malt, and puff our little white clouds of clear smoke from our segars, made from the mild and fragrant tobacco leaf, the growth of the country in which we lived. Some how or other the governor also used often to find his way there, and not unfrequently Señor Mantilla, who was at once the collector of the customs and the governor's chancellor of the exchequer.

It would scarcely be believed in this country, where, although contraband is so much encouraged by our legislature, it is so terribly persecuted by our courts of law, and where court favour is so imploringly, so abjectly sought, yet so dearly paid for, what a handsome amount of the custom-house revenue, and how large a portion of diplomatic influence, Don Agustin Saenz, captain of the polacca Florentina, could purchase for half a dozen barrels of London bottled stout. No

wonder that wires were untwisted and corks in abundance flew, and bumpers of the cream-covered draught went round for the enjoyment of the guests, when the polacca got well laden into port, and took her way, fully stowed, out of it, for an amount of duties which showed so much more modest a sum total than would have been exhibited if strictly adjusted to the odious custom-house tariff. The captain's double brown stout was omnipotent ; and if Mr. Guinness (unknown in our Corrientes days) would establish a porter brewery there, like the one he has in Dublin, I have no doubt he might buy up a large portion of the country, and turn it into a hop-garden for the supply of the world.

Round went the joke, loud was the laugh, and twinkle went the eye of the rubicund and jolly little captain, as he put a glass of porter into the collector's hand, and presented another to the governor, himself pledging every one in a bumper. He was a good-humoured, hospitable, and facetious fellow ; but, like a true Andalusian, he managed his prodigality with so much tact and address, that I fancy his brown stout generally turned out to be the very best of his mercantile speculations.

In his account of duties he had a "*quid pro quo*," equal at least to twenty shillings per bottle of his malt liquor.

The fact is, that smuggling is part and parcel of a Spaniard's character; and when this fruitful tree of evil was transplanted from Spain to South America, it there flourished in all the original vigour of the native soil. Smuggling, in the smaller communities of the colonies, assailed the honesty of the guardians of the public purse in many insidious shapes; bottled stout and benicarlos wine for their tables, handsome ornaments for their salas, satin dresses and silk stockings for their wives and daughters, doubloons tendered in the way of loan, never expected to be returned; tempting favours, in short, of every kind, which, though it may be easy to abstain from asking, it is not so easy to refuse when pressed upon us by a frank and liberal donor. Thus, in all parts, were poachers allowed to infest the domains of the public revenue; and rarely did I hear of any serious affray between the officers of the Patria preserves and these said poachers, although they set their springes there to catch more valuable game than woodcocks.

I knew a captain of the port at the Bajada who, in the roving times of Artigas, gave the bridegroom of his daughter, as dower of the lady on her marriage, an official document, permitting him to smuggle into the republic, that is, import, "duty free," as it was facetiously called, two cargoes of merchandise. The nuptial knot was tied, and the bridegroom realized by his bargain three thousand pounds—a large "tocher" in those days for a country wench, the daughter of a Gaucho who had not yet been able to get well at ease in his regiments.

How it happens in other countries, in matters of revenue, I am not so well prepared, as in South America, to say. There, generally speaking, and with exceptions always, when a man gets an empleo or office, his calculation is not exactly how much he may make by its legitimate emoluments, but what opportunities it offers for his making, *sub rosa*, a comfortable thing before he is precipitated from his perch by another cormorant: and it is curiously illustrative of the *rapidity* of the changes of public functionaries, that for all the peculation or spoliation of which they have been more or less guilty, I only know

of *one* who has retired to die in his bed what may be called a rich man.

Poor Mendez, the governor of Corrientes, used to think nothing, even after he had been five years a governor, of borrowing, from a friend, fifty or a hundred dollars; but perhaps in less than a couple of hours after he got them, they had vanished from him at the gaming table. And so it was with many other functionaries of that day. Some, no doubt, were timid men, and therefore afraid of doing anything very notorious against the revenue; but being generally fond of cards, and having as generally expensive wives and showy daughters to maintain, they felt themselves constrained, with large families and small salaries, to keep constantly nibbling in the dark at the loaf of the state which was entrusted (dangerous trust!) to their care. All parties employed were always in debt, and all, when they paid their creditors (not very regularly), contrived to do so with the money of the state; so that the public coffer came to be something like a poor-box, only sufficient to sustain the actual and improvident inmates of the treasury, which by their extravagance they had converted into a poor-house.

You are to understand that I here speak of the upper classes of *empleados*, or government officers ; those of lower grades, like our own in England, had all the work—I am sorry I cannot say all the honesty—but all the real privations of life to themselves.

Yours, &c.,

J. P. R.

LETTER X.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Fresh Trip to Buenos Ayres—Don Pancho Calafate, alias the Zapó—His habits and manner of life—A contrast to the Zapó—George Washington Tuckerman, Esq.—Female Quacks—More of Mr. Tuckerman—The passage with him in the Skiff—He is in love—Family Secrets—A Hurricane on the Paraná—Arrival at Buenos Ayres.

HAVING despatched, as already stated, our Gaucho general, the redoubted Don Pedro Campbell, to initiate his campaign, and give effect to his operations in the “camp,” he so effectually went to work, as will be presently shown, that we found vastly more extensive arrangements necessary than we had at first contemplated making.

There were now two head-quarters to be formed instead of one; and connected with these, indeed wholly dependent on them for supplies, there were a dozen other outposts at least. Some of them were ambulatory, some stationary; but they were all to be provided from Corrientes or Goya, or from both, with the means of pursuing a system of beneficial traffic, not of destructive warfare, with the

inhabitants at large. Conciliation and mutual benefit were the objects sought; goodwill and money, but at any rate *money*, the means of effecting them.

For more copious supplies of the golden means, as well as for the purpose of expounding the new aspect of affairs to rich allies in Buenos Ayres, I set off for that place (it was now considered by me more a trip than a journey or a voyage) nearly at the same time at which my brother went to form our establishment at Goya.

In order to perform this trip, as I could get neither a Lapacho canoe nor Payagua Indians at Corrientes, I determined to have a small open boat fitted up for my voyage down the stream of the Paraná, intending to return by land.

This boat I purchased of a ship builder that, in Corrientes, from the extent of his business, was called "great," as in every other part of the world from his overgrown, unwieldy bulk, he would undeniably have been deemed immense, really an immense man.

This person was one of the most prominent characters of Corrientes, and as such I must give you a sketch of him, which I shall try to make

slight, even though the subject be so heavy. He has long ago disappeared from the stage, but, for reasons of my own, I shall let him here pass under the *nom de guerre* of Pancho Calafate.

He was a native of the province of Biscay, in Spain; but he had, at an early stage of life, bid adieu to his native country, sought the new world, and settled at Corrientes.

The Biscainos are celebrated for their honesty, kindly feeling, bravery, and love of country; but they are equally notorious for their rough exterior, uncouth manners, and a bluntness of address which, in the uneducated classes, degenerates into a vulgar and almost brutish coarseness of disposition.

To this latter class Don Pancho, the ship-builder, belonged; and his unbearable temper and general grossness of body and mind brought him a great deal of ill-will even from the quiet and good natured Correntinos. This dislike to Pancho ended in a serious misfortune to him. He received a nickname, considered by general assent to be so appropriate, that it superseded both his Christian appellation and his patronymic. To his infinite annoyance, it accompanied him unin-

interruptedly to the grave. He was called "EL ZAPO," the toad. His huge and swoln figure, his gross habits and coarse demeanour, seemed to the Correntinos all to be happily expressed by the nickname "ZAPO." "EL ZAPO," therefore, he was dubbed, and "EL ZAPO" he remained. You will observe he was "EL ZAPO," *the toad, par excellence*,—as if he were the head, the chief member of the repudiated and amphibious race whose name he bore, and whose fame he kept alive.

Get a good name, it is said, and you may do what you will, for nobody will suspect you of what is evil: get a bad name, and of course the case is reversed. But once get a *nickname* (which is generally the offspring of malice), and you become either the irrevocable butt of society, or the galled jade whose withers nobody thinks it an offence to wring.

"EL ZAPO" found himself so completely in the latter predicament, that the very boys in the streets used to run after him, calling out, "There goes EL ZAPO!" till, the patience of the angry man being exhausted, he would run after them, in vain and heated efforts to catch and chastise them.

At length the use of the nickname became so

general, that strangers and the rising generation knew him by no other. Many were the awkward scrapes into which, on their first meeting him, foreigners fell by addressing him as "SEÑOR ZAPO," in the *boná fide* belief that that was his real name; but he never could bear any such involuntary mistake without a violent demonstration of his displeasure.

When I knew him, Don Pancho was truly a monstrous looking man. His coarse black hair hung over a countenance in which there was a forbidding mixture of fierceness, loose passion, and gluttony. His features were large; his eyebrows shaggy and portentous; his skin like tanned leather; his under lip and chops fell down; and to the nether extremity of these, reached his large and flat ears. He never wore a hat. In lieu of one he used a red Barcelona nightcap of silk manufacture, but so greasy and dirty as to render both the original colour and the texture matter of mere speculation.

"EL ZAPO's" mouth was ever furnished with the *cigarillo de papel*, or paper segar, except when it made way for a dram of neat aguardiente,* his

* The spirits of the country.

favourite enjoyment. A jacket he wore of gaudy calico, but it was worn suspended over his left arm, which, as well as the right one, being always bare from nearly the shoulder downwards, exhibited a rare combination of brawny muscle, overlaid with solid flesh, and of tawny skin, baked hard and brown by many a summer's sun. Waistcoat, braces, and neckcloth "EL ZAPO" dispensed with, as much too cumbersome. His wide trousers, rising just over his haunches, were sustained by a red sash, which came below the ship-builder's abdominal reception for the solids and liquids of life. No incumbrance but a large loose shirt shrouded the elastic emporium, which, year by year, expanded, till not only were his knees, like Falstaff's, hidden from his view, but till his slippered feet also became invisible to him, except by a painful effort. He wore no stockings. A *yesquero* or tinder-box in his jacket pocket, and a knife in his red girdle, completed his dishabille. His voice was harsh and stentorian as a boatswain's; and having an impediment in his speech, for his tongue appeared too large for even *his* capacious mouth, his stammering, often unintelligible, ended in a terrible growl when he was wrought into a passion.

He had several slaves, male and female, all of whom he fed and dressed coarsely, except one of the latter, and she at once served as cook and matrimonial *locum tenens* in the absence of any Mrs. Calafate. His male slaves served as apprentices and journeymen to the Zapo's own business of ship-building; and he reared the children of those of his negresses who had families so as to yield him equal profit with his purchased slaves, either at his own business, or as artisans hired out to others. With his slaves he cut large quantities of the finest timber into materials proper for ship-building, which he sent to Buenos Ayres, and he built or repaired vessels and small craft that traded to Corrientes. His two little docks, one of them wet, the other dry, were formed by a small inlet from the Paraná, the one being separated from the other by a rudely constructed lock. "EL ZAPO'S" cottage, from which he could look out upon his workmen, was surmounted by balusters roofed in, and it stood in a marshy place, surrounded, except in front, by wood. Under this "EL ZAPO" ate largely of roast beef; but his choice dishes were greasy ragouts, redolent of garlic, rancid bacon, sârdiñas, or small herrings steeped in vinegar and green oil,

bad bacalao, or salt cod, and worse hams, boiled in sour wine. To these were superadded lettuces, onions, olives, and anchovies, all of them bad, and some decayed, as might be expected in the house of a ship carpenter, in Corrientes, who had no correspondence with Europe. "EL ZAPO" drank his thick Mendoza white wine, or his dark benicarlo out of a large Spanish tumbler, never intended, even in the wine country of Catalonia, for anything but water. His ardent spirits "EL ZAPO" took out of a smaller-sized crystal vessel; but he so frequently replenished it as to make ample amends for diminished measure.

To see him gorging himself under his small corridor, as he looked through his balusters upon his men, and growled upon them when he was provoked, used to remind me of nothing so much as a rhinoceros in his cage, alternately irritated and fed.

I never knew a being whom he feared but Don Pedro Campbell, nor any for whom he cared but his quasi wife and his two sons. As there is generally a redeeming quality in the rudest specimens of our nature, so it is just to say that "EL ZAPO" cared for his family, and brought up his sons as respectable members of society.

"EL ZAPO'S" god was his belly, the all-and-all for which he lived; and humiliating, nay degrading as the exhibition was, it was yet not devoid of usefulness, as showing forth, in a gross shape, that besetting sin of a vast portion of mankind—an over indulgence in eating and drinking. I reflected how many more zapos, in all respects more refined, certainly, but still under the disguised and softened name of gourmands,—how many more "ZAPOS" of different sorts and sizes,—there are in what is called good society, in Europe.

Of Don Pancho I necessarily saw more than I desired, because he was the repairer of our ships, and the builder of our boats and canoes, a person without whose assistance we could not put to sea. I have described him perhaps a little more minutely than was necessary, and I should scarcely have ventured to do so were it not that my picture of "EL ZAPO" is strictly true to nature, and that as such, I have thought it might merit a passing glance from those who like to see her workings, even when developed in a form which humanity at large sighs on being forced to recognize as one of its own.

My skiff was prepared, equipped, and provisioned

for my voyage down the river. The vaqueano (or pilot) and his crew were ready; a little *toldo*, or awning of hides, was erected at the stern, to keep off the burning sun; and all things were ready for my departure. Accompanied by Mr. Postlethwaite and my brother, and followed by my faithful valet Juan, I proceeded to the embarcadero, or inlet where the boat lay, and after taking leave of my friends, I was about to step on board, when lo! we saw, coming towards us, in great haste, a little man of a rubicund countenance, and sharp snappish features, breathing hard, as if overcome by the fatigue of his forced march. His appearance was so singular, that, as he stopped me, so must I beg to detain my readers till I give some account of the new comer.

He was dressed in a blue military jacket with red facings, and farther adorned by double rows of globular brass buttons on his well-padded chest. His trousers were also *à la militaire*, and his waist, which he had squeezed with a sash into the smallest dimensions, united the upper and under parts of his body so as to give him pretty much the appearance, entomologically speaking, of the waspish tribe.

His large cavalry sabre, much *too* large for him, dangled between his legs, which obviously began to part company at the knees. He wore a hat very much resembling that of Ralpho, the squire of Hudibras : it was tied under his chin with a broad black riband ; his shirt collar was gathered up, and fastened by a gawdy rosette. His poncho was slung, plaid fashion, across his narrow left shoulder and his chest, and he carried his rebénque or leather thonged whip with a silver headed handle, slung on his right wrist. Two ear-rings, a pair of strong military gloves, a bit of blue and red ribbon drawn through a button-hole of his jacket, and a pair of silver spurs buckled over a stylish pair of potro boots, in one of which also was stuck his silver hafted knife, made up the rest of his attire. Such a combination of the fop and the Gaucho I never saw ; nor did the exhibition lose any of its rare novelty by the jaunty manner in which the little man in his finery approached us. The gigantic Zapo, too, stood at my side, in his coarsest dishabille, and formed a startling contrast to the *petit maître* who had just come up to us. He was unknown to my brother and myself, but Mr. Postlethwaite put an end to our intense cu-

riosity, to know who he could be, by formally introducing him as George Washington Tuckerman, Esq., of Washington city.

We made our bow; and the militaire holding with his left hand his high-peaked hat over his head, and putting his right to his lips, made a semicircular salutation with it, while, at an angle of forty-five, his body was gracefully bent forward to complete his introductory attitude.

Before Mr. Washington Tuckerman could follow up his urbanity of manner by a set speech, El Zapó, with one of his horse laughs, contemptuously took between his forefinger and thumb one of the dependent corners of the traveller's poncho, and holding it up, said "Bless me! Mr. Tuckerman, from whence are you come, such a dandy?"

The Washingtonian, who at another time might have been pleased with the compliment, but thought it now a great infringement on his dignity, turned round and snappishly said to the ship carpenter, "And pray what may that be to you,—*Señor Zapó?*"

The gigantic "*Zapó*," in whose eyes the nickname was as smoke, not less tenacious of his dignity than

the American petit-maître was of his, turned round with a growl and a scowl which were both terrific—"Be-be-better manners, you *wasp*, you jackanapes!" he stammered out "Ca-can you not ta-take a joke without showing your sti-sti-sting?"

Mr. Washington retorted more bitterly than before; he strutted up to his huge opponent, and "*Zapoed*" him with incredible volubility, till the latter beginning to give evident symptoms of a design to throw the little man into the river, Mr. Postlethwaite interposed, and taking Mr. Tuckerman's side, brought "*El Zapo*" back to good humour. Once or twice, however, when the beau's back was turned on him, he made as if he were spanning his own portentous body, winking at the same time upon Tuckerman's small and tightened waist.

When "*El Zapo*" retired, I learnt from Mr. Tuckerman, that, having just arrived from the interior, he was anxious to proceed to Buenos Ayres, and would feel for ever grateful to me if I would postpone my voyage till the morrow, and give him a passage in my boat. His oration was interlarded with a thousand apologies for the liberty

he had taken, and his gratified sense of my kindness in the postponement, to which I readily agreed.

He expressed his surprise, as we walked from the beach homewards, how I could possibly live among such a set of barbarians as the Correntinos ; and there was no end to his wonder when I said that I thought them (excepting, out of consideration for his feelings, El Zapo) a good natured and obliging people. I soon found that, with all his politeness, he had had the knack of picking quarrels with a great many of them, and was not much liked by any. Nor could I find a reason for this, except that he was chagrined and disappointed because everything was not in Corrientes as it was in Washington, and because, not contented with having found out the fact, he was continually thrusting the unwelcome observation upon the people. Now the Correntinos thought their city just as good a city as Washington, and this they had no hesitation in telling Don Jorge (Korkey, he pronounced it, being unable to cope with the double guttural).

His love of Englishmen, and especially of Irishmen, as represented in the person of Don Pedro

Campbell, was in no wise increased by the inhabitants continually telling him that after all he was *only an American*, and that the true European English, Messrs. Campbell, Postlethwaite, the Robertsons, &c., told them Corrientes, for its size, was as fine a city as any they knew.

By little disputes of this kind, of no mortal concernment to Don Korkey, he contrived to live continually in hot water. His temper, warm, and indeed irritable for a man who, at the same time, had so large a dash in him as he had of the romantic, grew testy and acrimonious to the poor people of the country, whose prejudices he could not forgive, whose habits he could not tolerate, and whose education and manners he held in absolute contempt.

Although viewing, however, the surface only, which Mr. Tuckerman's character presented, there might appear nothing to the careless observer which would induce him to dig for a precious metal; yet to the more acute and skilful analyzer of the strata of the human heart, there was promise of a very good vein beneath, and one requiring but little labour to open up. In point of fact, Tuckerman had strong affections, was a faithful and a

zealous friend, loved his country and those whom he had left behind, not wisely, perhaps, but too well ; and he had at bottom a kindly feeling for his fellow creatures at large.

As a strong illustration of the latter (and where shall we find a better ?) point in his character, I must mention that he invariably travelled with a small medicine chest, not for his own use, but for that of the country-people. Wherever he went, he acted to them as their doctor, without fee or reward, and in this respect Pope's lines were strictly applicable to him :—

“ Is any sick ? The man of Ross relieves,
Prescribes, attends,—the medicine makes and gives :”

but the kindly feelings of his heart he seldom allowed the poor people to perceive, except in his acts, for he was generally most querulous with them when most anxiously administering to their health.

In that unpeopled country there are no doctors. The whole science of the *materia medica* is in the hands of a few *curanderas*, esteemed half witches, but in reality poor ignorant female quacks. In some cases, from the distance at which the sick man lies, they never see him at all, but judge from certain

reports carried to them of the malady, and send back the few simples which are either to kill or to cure the resigned patient. In other instances they sit, perhaps two or three of them congregated together, by the side of the sufferer, tormenting him with one thing after another, while the crones nod and wink, and consult in low tones, and of course oftener kill the patient than cure him.

I recollect hearing of one occasion, and no doubt there were many similar ones, when Mr. Tuckerman having alighted at an estancia to change horses, was told that the master of the house was dying. He went into the wretched and darkened apartment, where on a common hide stretcher lay the moaning invalid, with three withered old doctresses around him, applying various remedies, all equally wide of the mark. The testy physician hastily and roughly turned them all out of the room, threw their cataplasms and their decoctions after them, bled the patient, administered to him some of his own good medicine, and left him the following day free from fever, and almost convalescent. The people of the house were struck with admiration of his medical skill, gratefully thanked him for all his kindness, while he galloped

off, telling them not to be such idiots as again to employ the old witches that had nearly killed the good man of the house.

Au reste, George Washington Tuckerman, Esq., who, like a good many of his countrymen, could not well brook the idea of superiors, was yet the pink of politeness to his friends and equals, and at all times anxious to please and to serve them. He was a most amusing companion, being brimful of a mixture of enthusiasm and romance, peculiar perhaps to his countrymen, which ever and anon overflows in such rhapsodies of love and glory as fall very oddly on the ear of an Englishman, so cautious of making what he considers a *display* before others.

Mr. Tuckerman had another failing of his nation not so amusing as the one just mentioned. He spoke with indignation of the haughty pretensions of our aristocracy, though he himself had a great deal of aristocratic pride. He launched out into encomiums on equality and free institutions, and disdaining, as I have hinted, all pretensions in another to superiority over *him*; and yet he unconsciously affected that very superiority over the South Americans to such a degree as to

excite their general dislike of what they considered his overbearing and rude manner.

In this particular, our worthy friends across the Atlantic ought really to see that they halt very awkwardly between two opinions : aristocracy is in their hearts, democracy in their mouths. They would fain indulge in the first, yet fear to let go the second,—they cannot reconcile their practice and their preaching. As republicans, they are theoretical democrats ; as sons and descendants of proud old John Bull, they are practical aristocrats to the very core. A war of opinion and feeling is thus kept up in every individual breast throughout the union ; but in a country where greatness and riches make such rapid daily strides, it is not difficult to foresee which of the two principles at work will, in the end, have the upper hand.

The morning following that of my introduction to Tuckerman, all being ready for our voyage, my companion hastened to the beach with a large sea-chest (carried by two peons), a portmanteau, a barrel of biscuits, and a hammock. His military garb was changed for that of a tar. He had a gun and a dog with him. Over his shoulder were slung shot-belt and powder-horn, and in his right

hand he carried his smart *rebénque*, which he cracked ever and anon in his dog's ears, till the poor animal followed in fear and trembling close at the heels of his master.

Many apologies were made for the quantity of luggage embarked in the boat; but after we had contrived to make the chest serve the purpose of a table, and after the biscuit-barrel, portmanteau, and hammock had been stowed away; when the dog was crouching under the stern-sheets, and George Washington Tuckerman was as comfortable as a fidgety nature would allow him to be; the sails were hoisted, the wind was fair, the current ran fast, and in half an hour we were out of sight of Corrientes.

Accustomed in my travels on horseback to depend chiefly on the provisions always readily furnished to me by the estancieros and postmasters, I seldom encumbered myself with much travelling apparatus, except when going, as now, by the river, or whirled over the pampas in a carriage. I had in the boat everything I thought necessary for the present occasion; but I soon found that, as compared with Mr. Tuckerman, I was a mere novice in the way of gastronomic *prévoyance*. He

opened his large sea-chest, which I had more than once wished at the bottom of the river ; but how great was my remorse, how unequivocal the condemnation of my folly, when I scanned its contents. It was divided into two equal compartments, of which the one, containing merely the owner's military-gauche finery and other wearing apparel, attracted little of my attention ; but the *other* end,—oh, ye gentlemen navigators of the Paraná ! ye travellers to Paraguay and Misiones ! ye riders from Corrientes to Goya in one day ! ye broiled, and dusty, and insect-bitten scourers of the Pampa plains ! think of what I saw,—and saw to be presently used for our mutual gratification. There stood before me a complete American *batterie de cuisine*, tea service, dessert service, glass, knives, forks, spoons, cruet-holder, and, in a well-protected corner, a stand of decanters splendidly replenished with wine and liqueur. Redolent of the Pekoe leaf and of the Mocha bean rose two small canisters destined for morning and evening use ; and the larder displayed, here a little bit of ham nicely sliced, there some beautiful-looking butter, with a cold chicken, olives, pickles,—all showing that nothing had been neglected or forgotten.

On my expressing my wonder how he had become possessed of such a stock of dainties in Corrientes, he explained to me that shortly after his arrival at Santa Fé, where he had sojourned for some months, he became convinced that it was impossible for a gentleman to live in those regions without providing himself with the ordinary comforts of civilized life. "I therefore," he continued, "explained to a dear friend in New York my forlorn and degrading position: that I had not on my travels even a cup for my coffee, nor a fork for my vegetables, nor a tea-kettle in which to boil a little water; that I had no hams, no wine, no cheese, no brandy; nothing to eat solids off but an earthen platter, nor out of which to drink liquids but a cow's horn,—an article (he emphatically added) of which I detest the very look."

His friend therefore had sent him the apparatus which I saw; and with all the requisite implements of his craft, Don Jorge merged the dignity of the travelling gentleman in the more interesting occupation of itinerant cook. Arrayed in his little white apron, he performed all his voluntary duties *à merveille*. Not even allowing me to act the part of butler, he laid his own cloth, and cleaned

his glasses and decanters with his own hands. I told him he had for ever spoiled me for travelling with any other person; and of this he was proud. I praised his cookery, and he smiled; but I extolled above all, as it really deserved to be, his coffee, and this threw him into raptures. "Coffee," said Mr. Tuckerman, "ought, above every other liquid, to be called the beverage of life; but, alas! how few know how to make it! The French dispute precedence with the Turks; but I say the Americans with more justice do so. I sometimes," he continued, "half envy your Turk, reclining on his superb ottoman, inhaling his tobacco through the circular windings of his serpentine hookah, sipping the essence of his coffee bean, unmixed with sugar, unadulterated with cream; while spouting cascades cool the air, and gurgling fountains make music in his ears. See him among the shady foliage of his oriental garden, his eunuchs around, and his Circassian slaves awaiting his nod! Who, in these luxuries, Mr. Robertson, is like the Turk? Yet *soul*, in the midst of all these tempting pleasures, is wanting; and for my part I am free to confess, that early associations, fond reminiscences, and judgment matured, have wedded me,

to the exclusion of all others, to American ideas of social happiness and domestic enjoyment." Here a suppressed sigh having struggled upwards and forced its way out, Tuckerman pressed his hands together, and ejaculated, "Ah, Charlotte! Charlotte! Where *thou* art, too happy should I be to fix myself for life! With the fascinating simplicity of *thy* manners, the elegance of *thy* cultivated mind, and the winning yet chaste glance of *thy* soft beaming eye, where could I find happiness but with thee?"

The Spaniards have a way, when they are exquisitely pleased with anything, of gathering into a point the five fingers of their right hand, and putting the tips of them to their lips, give them, as they are again withdrawn, a smack of supreme delight. Some of them perform this action more, some less, gracefully; but Don Jorge fancied he could manage it so well, that almost every indication of his pleasure was signified in this way. The sublime pitch to which he was roused up by Charlotte, coffee, and the Turks, caused him to kiss his fingers with great devotion, and he then swung round his arms so gracefully that, coming in contact with his coffee cup, he swept it away, and

was quickly brought back to his senses by a loss so serious in such a part of the globe.

Thus we glided down the stream, very smoothly as regarded myself, though here and there our progress seemed ruffled in the eyes of Don Jorge. What he looked on as grievous misfortunes, however, I viewed rather as the amusing incidents of travel, and relished them the more, the more I saw of their perplexing effects on my companion. He was by no means singular in his fastidiousness. I have travelled over a good part of England with a friend, and heard him fret over a capital dinner at a country inn because he had not wax candles lit up, and because the port wine was not twenty years old, nor had the Madeira made a voyage to the East Indies.

On the second day we called at Goya, and received abundance of compliments and fresh provisions from Don Pedro Quesney, of whom more anon. The Frenchman and American vied with each other in acts of mutual civility, which they seasoned with a rare jumble of uncouth words, and dished up with a superabundance of overstrained but amusing gesticulation.

We again sailed, intending to make straight for

the Conchas, a small inlet and port about seven leagues to the north of Buenos Ayres.

For four days we sailed delightfully down the Paraná, the voyage being in no small degree enlivened by Don Jorge's conversation and cheer. He let me into the secret that he was the youngest of fourteen children, whose portraits graced the walls, and whose presence made festive the board of his father's mansion. The latter was Major Tuckerman, who, having greatly distinguished himself in the wars with the Indians, had gone to the capital in the evening of his life to enjoy the profits of his honourable labours. Of the family, my companion was the only one of erratic habits; and to these he had taken to satisfy his ambition of making a fortune; to enlarge his knowledge of mankind; and to enable him to solemnize by marriage, in a manner suitable to her rank and education, his early vows of love for "Charlotte;" she being at the time he spoke just eighteen, about half his own age.

While, on our fourth evening from Goya, Mr. Tuckerman was dreaming of a romantic future with his adored Charlotte, and sipping his coffee in perfect delight, our pilot was anxiously watching

a fast-coming storm,—a pampero, with its usual rapid and irresistible march, threatening to overwhelm us on our bow. He tried to reach the eastern coast—impossible: to take shelter on the Chaco side—still more impracticable to near it. Bearing all before it, the south-wester struck us with the fury of a tornado, and we were irresistibly driven by the concentrated violence of the blast upon one of those fungous masses or swampy islands of the river, which rest upon a dubious foundation of water and quicksand.

In we were drifted among branches of trees and tangled brushwood, by the roaring wind and lashing torrent. The sky was overcast, the night coming on, and the rain fell in torrents. With this, and with the spray, we were completely saturated, and it was not without great exertions that we saved our boat from being swamped altogether.

Everything got wet; our clothes, our luggage, Don Jorge's fine provisions; but our boat we secured; and our next care was to make a bivouac for the night. Poor Tuckerman, I found, was not so good at this as in making coffee; and indeed while we were working, he stood the picture of despair on contemplating the losses which, in the confusion of

the storm, he had suffered. With two or three hides which we had, and assisted by the boughs and branches of trees, we made a rude sort of canopy under which we all crouched. A yesquero, or tinder-box, was called into requisition, a fire was made, spite of the rain; and, though the wind howled, and the Paraná roared, we contrived to make ourselves merry. It must be confessed that the deep growl of a tiger now and then rather startled us, and in particular acted very violently on the nerves of Don Jorge, as well as on his conversation, which was here and there somewhat wild and out of joint. But we felt, on the whole, pretty secure from any attack, and so we endeavoured to make the most of our dilemma.

Three days had we to pass in the island, with very little more comfort than during the first night. We contrived to make our temporary awning more into the form of a hovel; but our nice provisions were all consumed or destroyed, and for a considerable portion of the time we were reduced to roasted maize and a nut called *maní*, which is very plentiful in that part of the world. The pampero at length died away; the Paraná became again tranquil; the clear cerulean sky was over our head;

and launching our boat once more on the river, we reached Santa Fé the following evening.

Resolved to be made no longer the sport of the winds, I there took to horse; and Don Jorge, determined on the same course, accompanied me.

But whether from my desire to be at the end of my journey being more impetuous than his, or whether from his endurance of hard riding being less than mine, I left him at the end of the first day to come on more leisurely, and on the fourth I was in Buenos Ayres.

Yours, &c.,

J. P. R.

LETTER XI.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

The Port of Goya—Don Pedro Quesney—Artigueño Freebooters—
More of Don Pedro.

London, 1842.

HAVING now made up our minds to open our commercial campaign on rather a sweeping scale, it was resolved that my brother, with a view to facilitating our operations, should make a run down the stream to Buenos Ayres (which he did as just detailed), and return forthwith. It was necessary not only to combine with our allies there, but to strengthen the sinews of war by replenishing the money-chest.

We had introduced the custom of “money for hides,” as well as money for everything else; and a goodly supply of doubloons, therefore, became indispensable.

We found that for active operations our point was, not the city of Corrientes, but the port of Goya, and there it was further determined I should fix my head quarters.

Goya, as already stated, lies on the Paraná, fifty-two leagues below Corrientes, and the port is situated on what looks like an arm of the river, and it takes this appearance from an island of two or three miles in length, lying between the main land on which Goya is situated, and the great body of the Paraná. This island runs parallel with the left or eastern bank of the river, and at no great distance from it, and closing in at either end, a narrow but deep mouth is left for the flowing of the water through this branch. The part of the river which thus flows between the island and the main land is called "El riacho de Goya," or rivulet of Goya, though it is half the width of the Thames at London Bridge, and the channel twelve to fourteen feet in depth. We should be astonished to hear such a body of water in England called a rivulet; but after all, the Riacho de Goya only bears the proportion of one to the great stream of which it forms a part.

The port of Goya was not in existence five and twenty years before I first went to it in 1815. The surrounding land, including that on which the village now stands, belonged to an old woman called *Francisca*, commonly known by the diminutive of

that name, *Goya*; and she having built for herself on the banks of the river a small house, still standing when I was there, in which she managed her large cattle estate, it was found by vessels going to and from Corrientes and Paraguay a convenient point to which to send their boats and canoes to *carnear*, or procure beef. By degrees it was ascertained that the channel at both ends, and along the island, was deep and safe; that the banks of the rivulet near Goya's house afforded most excellent accommodation for loading and unloading large vessels; and so the governor of Corrientes was requested to found a *capilla* there. A *capilla*, or chapel, in a Catholic community, is the nucleus around which gregarious man is sure to form a society; and thus by degrees it was with old Goya's port. The *capilla* brought the curate's cottage; the hearers of mass reared the *pulperia* or public house; then came the baker, the shoemaker, the tailor. The *capilla* rose to a "comandancia," or head-quarters of a commandante, and his little body of troops; and this brought so many settlers, that thenceforward the growth of the *comandancia* into a thriving village was no longer problematical.

It is curious to observe how close is the analogy

between the growth of man from his birth, and the rise of a community from its nascent existence. A city has its seven ages as well as man: it gains strength, and arrives at its prime through its various grades, as he does; and it totters to its fall, and in the end crumbles into dust as man himself declines into his helpless senility, and at last gives up his body to mix with the clod which hems in his coffin in the grave.

There is no place in the world, I believe, which has not its *great man*. Every village, every town, every city; nay, every metropolis, has its great man; his rank and importance being suited to that of the place where he is looked up to by the many. In London, with two millions of inhabitants, where it would seem impossible that any *individual* could remain distinguished and apart from all the rest, there is yet *one great man*, who stands upon an eminence so lofty and commanding that he is instantly recognised without mention of his name.

In *Goya*, when I arrived there, the great man was a very odd one, yet, indisputably, the *He* of the place: his name was Don Pedro Quesney, a Frenchman by birth, and in every way a remarkable man.

He went out to South America in his original character of a common sailor in a merchant ship; but having higher aspirations than even the main-top of his vessel, he deserted the sea, and commenced his career on *terra firma*.

Quesney, although extremely ignorant, was enterprising, active, shrewd, and plausible to a degree. His extreme politeness to be sure had the character of fawning and servility, and the over-wrought affability of manner which he affected was little better than grimace. Yet in a world universally fond of every kind, even the grossest, of flattery, Don Pedro found his account in offering up the incense of his to all above him, since it certainly advanced his interests and bettered his position. By degrees, with the money which he went on amassing, and with the credit which with increasing facility he acquired, he was elevated to the rank of a *quasi*-merchant; and having in particular ingratiated himself with an old friend of ours, a Mr. Stroud, he was enabled to go up the river Paraná to push his way in the world, with a property of eight to ten thousand dollars, and with which he landed at Corrientes. Here he heard of the rising prosperity of Goya; and after doing what business he could in

the capital of the province, he proceeded to the new port, and there determined to establish himself for good.

It was before the Artigas revolution began that Quesnèy became an inhabitant of Goya. Partly from ostentation, partly from a strong desire to establish his character permanently as an extensive merchant, he built himself a habitation on so magnificent a scale as at once to give to Goya a tone which, with its few scattered cottages alone, it could never have assumed. Don Pedro's house, like most others in that country, having no upper story, occupied a large space of ground. His rooms, although floored with neither deals nor brick, were spacious and airy, and he had spare bed-rooms for visitors. Contiguous to his dwelling, on one side, stood his warehouse and shop; while, on the other, to serve as a deposit for dry hides, some immense *galpones* or barns were erected. They were capable of containing thirty thousand dry ox hides, and as many horse skins. Around the buildings lay a well-cultivated garden, closed in with a neat paling, painted green, with pretty little gates before and behind. A few trees and shrubs rose up about his doors, and some

creepers clambered about the trellis-work of his windows and verandah, giving the establishment, though so large, a neat and picturesque appearance.

Don Pedro's mode of living was in accordance with the simple magnificence of his abode. He kept open house for all comers and goers. His long deal tables ran from one end to the other of his great hall or eating-room, and many strong deal chairs, though homely, clean, stood ready for the traveller and the wayfaring man. The best of cheer, in great abundance, was ever at hand; and the master of the house himself bustled about, anxious, to all appearance, solely for the comfort of his guests.

But in the midst of this great hospitality (which cost in that cheap country but little), Don Pedro, like many a better man, was devoured by the *auri sacra fames*. It was to him, as to millions of higher minds, the source of all his pleasures and of all his pains. He gradually acquired the appetite of a miser; and his honesty at length gave way before that most ungovernable of all passions, when it fairly takes possession of the heart,—the lust of gold.

As he saw his galpones gradually fill with the

best produce of the country,—the fine ox hides of that part of South America, so well known in England,—the eye of Quesnèy delighted more and more in the view of the accumulating piles of riches. Day by day his heart yearned towards them, and day by day he felt more and more loth to part with them in the shape of returns, which he was bound to make to Buenos Ayres, for the goods which he had there received on consignment and on credit. Isolated in a place then little known, even in the capital of the country, he was beyond the practical reach of his creditors; and, although for a long time he answered plausibly, at last he disregarded their remonstrances, and ultimately set them at defiance. The hides in his sight grew into property of his own. He talked of *his* hides; and the piles upon piles he possessed, he showed with undisguised pleasure and pride. He would not, at last, even sell them on the spot. “Don Pedro and his hides” passed into a sort of proverb in the province:—“They are as difficult to part as Don Pedro and his hides;” or, “We shall see that when Don Pedro sells his hides;” such was the sort of proverbial notoriety into which he and his hides grew.

But, in an evil hour for Don Pedro, the Artigueño,

troubles commenced ; and it was not to be expected that, when pillage, and rapine, and murder often spread both far and near, a man situated like Quesnèy should escape. As his piles of hides rose, so rose the belief that he had large hidden treasure with which he bought them. On three different occasions the lawless marauders attacked his house, and in two of these onsets they left him for dead. In the first instance they forced open his shop and warehouse, and perhaps would have been content to seize his money, and whatever moveable property they could contrive to carry off, without doing him much bodily harm ; but, although of a timid nature, the unhappy Quesnèy, when he saw his cherished property about to be ravished from him, threw himself into the midst of the robbers, and, actuated by a feeling of despair beyond all prudential control, he grasped his bales and his goods till he was almost hacked to pieces by the Artigueños ; and he only desisted when his wounds and loss of blood stretched him apparently lifeless on the floor.

The second attack on the unfortunate Frenchman was even more ferocious, and more cold-blooded than the first. A party, armed to the

teeth, entered his house at the dead of night, and dragging him from his room, began, with many imprecations, to demand his hidden treasure. Poor Quesnèy had really no such thing to give up, for all his treasure consisted in his piles of hides, and a few goods in his shop. In vain he assured the midnight assassins of the fact; in vain, in his broken and almost unintelligible Spanish, did he plead for mercy. He was literally put to the torture to extort a confession: the whole of his front teeth were dashed out, and wounds were unsparingly inflicted on his body till total insensibility released him for a time from his torture, and induced his desperate and ruthless assailants to believe that, if they had not succeeded in getting the Frenchman's gold, they had at least the pleasure of depriving him of life. His recovery was long dubious, and was considered by his neighbours as next to miraculous.

The third and last time that Quesnèy's house was attacked, the wretched victim, scared and affrighted with the recollection of former horrors, fled at the first approach and noise of the robbers, leaving them to do their worst. Escaping by a private back door, through his garden, he rushed

with frantic speed into the open country, with only his night-shirt to protect him from the cold of a bleak winter's night.* There he remained till the dawn; and when he ventured to crawl back to his house, he found he had lost everything which in the shape of goods and other portable property he possessed. His darling hides luckily were too bulky and too common an article to merit even a thought from an Artigueño robber. Manufactured goods and money were the booty he always sought.

This robbery of Don Pedro's shop recalls to my mind an incident which is so curiously illustrative of the state of affairs in Corrientes, at the time of which I write, that I will take leave to digress a little from my story to give you the anecdote.

Those Artigueño marauders would form a party, at a few leagues distant from Corrientes, and there deliberately plan a general sack of the town, which, being defenceless, had nothing to do but to submit to such lawless and predatory visits.

On one of the first of these occasions, as the troopers were advancing, all well armed and

* Even in the warm climate of Corrientes, the winter nights are often both bleak and cold. The coldest month of their winter is June.

mounted, they found on their way an old *chacarero*, or small farmer, standing at his cottage door, smoking his *cigarillo*.

“Come along with us, old man,” said one of the Artigueños to him, pointing to him at the same time to mount his horse, which stood saddled at the door.

“But where are you going?” said the old farmer, somewhat alarmed at the appearance of the troop; “where are you going to take me?”

“Why,” replied the freebooter, “we are going to *sack* the town; so come along.”

The honest Correntino farmer, brought up in happy ignorance of such lawless proceedings, did not even know what was meant by *sacking* the town, and so he asked for information on this point.

“Mount your horse, you old fool,” said the Artigueño gruffly; “come with us and *see*.”

Afraid to disobey, the Chacarero mounted accordingly, and kept by his friend who had thus given his peremptory order, but much musing, as he rode along, what might be the object of his visit to Corrientes.

To his astonishment, when he got there, he

saw his friends begin to disperse about the town, to enter shops, houses and stores, and to help themselves to whatever they fancied, without any apparent displeasure, certainly without any resistance on the part of the real owners of the property. Nay, in many instances, they gave their visitors money on its being demanded, and seemed extremely happy when the troopers left the shops and other places with their respective loads.

The marauders once more formed into a body, and each carrying his own share of the spoil, they trotted leisurely out of the town, while the old Chacarero found himself on his way home, with a large cut of good blue cloth, a new hat, a couple of pieces of nice printed calico, and two or three dollars in money, all which had been given to him by the grim Gaucho, who first addressed him at his cottage door. There he was left in safety, and going inside, where his wife and family were, he threw down the booty, exclaiming in great glee, "Cosa linda havia sido un saqueo!" "A very nice thing indeed, is this sacking of a town! Here I have got a cut of good cloth for a jacket and poncho, a new hat, gowns for my wife and girls, and money to buy me segars,—all for the merely

carrying of it away! Truly, *sacking* is an excellent thing."

Returning to the ill-fated Quesnèy.—One would think that the sufferings which he had endured, and the losses which he had sustained, would have been sufficient to drive him to seek that safety elsewhere which he did not and scarcely could expect to enjoy, in such turbulent times, in his large and solitary mansion at the port of Goya. But, cured of his wounds in the two first instances, and reconciled to his losses in all, he resumed his usual habits. His politeness to every one, and particularly to the Gauchos, rather increased than abated: his hospitable doors still stood open, inviting all comers to enter; and although, under an assumed confidence and cordiality with every one, he lived a daily martyr to the terror which total insecurity of life and property produced, it was clear he was too much wrapped up in his hides and his household,—too much wedded to his actual habits and pursuits, ever voluntarily to separate himself from Goya.

Don Pedro's few neighbours sympathized sincerely with him in the desperate attacks made upon his life, and afforded him every assistance

which kindness and humanity could prompt. But it must be confessed they did not feel nearly so much for his pecuniary losses. In fact they looked upon his property as ill-gotten gear. His dealings were principally with the small farmers and Gauchos of the surrounding districts, who found it more convenient to bring their few hides to Quesnèy, than to take them to Corrientes. They knew nothing about accounts, figures, measures, or weights ; and although Don Pedro was extremely ignorant himself, he had yet sufficient cunning always to see that no errors of calculation were against him, however blind he might be to them when in his favour. Thus he gradually acquired what is so justly hateful to every community,—a character for *wronging the poor*,—for wringing by fraud from their hard-earned and scanty means, the large gains which so rapidly swelled up and increased his own stores.

There is assuredly a very useful lesson to be gathered from the particulars which I have just related of the great man of Goya.

Pierre Quesnèy, the poor French sailor, converted into Don Pedro Quesnèy, the rich French merchant, was one of those adventurers whose

characters, without being changed in their essential qualities, are strongly wrought upon, and thus greatly modified by a new development of them, under the strange and unlooked-for circumstances in which by fortune, or more truly and certainly, by an overruling Providence, they are for the wisest of purposes sometimes placed.

Pierre, the sailor, was ignorant, cunning, avaricious, and personally vain; obsequious to those above him, plausible to his equals, and possessing that latent, but, when awakened, often strong ambition *to rise*, of which few men or none are absolutely destitute.

These materials all remained at work in the character of Don Pedro the merchant. But his ignorance was glossed over by his wealth and his station: his manners were improved by coming in contact with better classes; his cunning was covered by an apparent simplicity of mind; his obsequious manner became mixed with a certain air of self-importance; his avarice, by constant nurture, became his ruling passion; and his personal vanity swelled into an ostentation and display of his riches, accompanied by many anxious endeavours to become a man of distinction in the world.

But as Quesnèy set out with no good qualities of the heart, and as none were superinduced by his prosperous career, the fabric which he raised was hollow and unsound : his joys, arising out of the contemplation of his wealth, as they sprang from a poisoned source, so they gave him back only bitterness in the end : he made no friends, he was beset by many enemies ; and in the conclusion of his career, he lost everything—was reduced almost to beggary, and I believe sank under the accumulated misfortunes which overtook him in his old age. He possessed not those higher elements of our nature, which enable the mind, if not to overcome adversity, at all times to bear up against it.

Yours, &c.,

W. P. R.

LETTER XII.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Departure from Corrientes for Goya—Road to Goya—Don Ponciano Delgado, the Indian Schoolmaster—First interview with Don Pedro Quesnèy—His Hospitality—Goya Society.

THE foregoing sketch of Don Pedro Quesnèy's history I obtained from his friend, though, as our readers will have perceived, in every way his reverse, Don Ysidoro Martinez y Cires. My brother, who, on his way to Buenos Ayres, spent a day with Don Pedro, informed him of my design of passing some months in Goya, to superintend our business there, and I immediately had a courier from the latter, begging in the most pressing terms that, during my stay at Goya, I would make his house my home.

My brother having left early in December, I set off by land for Goya soon after, the distance, as has been stated, being about fifty-two Spanish leagues.* I remarked little or nothing of the least interest on the road till I came, about half way, to a collection of wretched hovels called "Las Garzas,"

* 156 English Miles.

the misery of which, and the wild looks of their inmates, were quite startling. They were, exclusively, reduced or domesticated Indians from the opposite shore of the Gran Chaco,—inert and almost naked savages, living in the most squalid filth and poverty. I distributed a few dollars among them; and in my numerous journeys afterwards, they never omitted by the most abject and humble, but pressing solicitations, to make me pay toll to them as I passed through their miserable place of abode.

Five leagues from Goya, and on the road from Corrientes, lies Santa Lucia, a town or village founded by the Jesuits, and built in their usual quadrangular style. It still maintained its character of a “reduccion;”^{*} and here the Indians, more civilized, were comfortable and happy. I was hospitably received by the vicar, an intelligent and amiable priest; and I was much delighted to make the acquaintance of the village schoolmaster, Don Ponciano Delgado, an Indian, and a legitimate disciple of the Jesuits. He had in fact been born and bred in this village; had been schoolmaster for nearly forty years; and being then about seventy, it followed that he had passed his majority at the time of the downfall of

^{*} Or settlement of domesticated Indians.

his masters. He was a hale, healthy, and vivacious old man. He became my correspondent afterwards, and I have in my possession two or three of his letters, written in pure Spanish, and in a hand as firm as was his own step. He was a mighty favourite, even in his school-room, of his own juveniles, whom notwithstanding he always styled to me his "vinagres," or vinegars. Many a visit did I afterwards pay him, and to much of his traditionary lore respecting the sons of Loyola did I listen. He spoke of them at all times with the greatest enthusiasm, and often would the tear start to his eye as he recalled to mind their sufferings and their meekness in the hour of their expulsion and degradation.

Having partaken of a capital dinner with the vicar, who asked old Don Ponciano and the Alcalde for the occasion, they all took leave of me with great cordiality, the vicar giving me his blessing as I mounted my horse, and Don Ponciano shaking me heartily by the hand before I started. After a pleasant canter of an hour and a half, I arrived at Goya, and made directly for Don Pedro Quesnèy's mansion, which stood conspicuously occupying a large portion of one side of the

unfinished, indeed, and scarcely commenced, public square of the port.

Don Pedro, who had been expecting me all day, was standing at his gate as I approached ; and no sooner did he discern me, than I could hear him hurriedly calling his man servant. When I got to his door they were both at my side : Don Pedro held my reins as I alighted, and in another instant I found myself in his arms, receiving many respectful and affectionate hugs. Forthwith I was ushered into the house.

I found Don Pedro a tall and broad-built man, but of rather gaunt appearance : his features had been handsome, but the loss of almost all his teeth, including the front ones, caused his cheeks to collapse and his lips rather to turn in, which gave him an aged appearance, although he was only about fifty years old. His other features were disfigured by scars left by the sabre wounds which had been inflicted upon him. He had large and prominent light blue eyes, which expressed an uneasy and anxious solicitude, and his manner was *empresé* and fidgety.

He was oddly dressed. He had continued, as the best model of costume, to wear that of his early days,

or of Louis the Sixteenth's time. He wore nankeen shorts with white cotton stockings, and very ample shoes. He had a long-waisted and somewhat rusty black coat, a white waistcoat coming low down, a profusion of cambric ruffle not over clean, and a thick, high, white neckcloth tied, on account of the heat, loosely round his neck. He had two large ill-shapen seals at the end of a gold watch-chain, and a large rose was stuck in his waistcoat button-hole. He was without his hat, and over his high forehead a few straggling grey hairs only were to be seen.

But the most remarkable point about Don Pedro was his speech. Totally uneducated, he had not been able to preserve his French, and still less had he been able to catch the Spanish idiom. Leaving at an equi-distance each of the high roads to the philology of either country, he had got between the two, into a sort of deep and muddy rut, through which he was evidently condemned to travel during the remainder of his life.

At first, Don Pedro's jargon was to me, albeit not unacquainted with French, and well versed in Spanish, unintelligible, and I found afterwards that, although he poured out his words with

great rapidity, almost everybody was in fact more indebted to signs than to language for the comprehension of his meaning. By residing with him, however, I got to understand him readily, often acting as interpreter to my less fortunate neighbours ; and I shall here, for the better comprehension of what he said, endeavour to give an English equivalent for the Spanish words of which he made use.

As Don Pedro, then, led me into the house, he called out to his man of all-work, a handsome young mulatto lad, named Ventura :—

“ Vangtùre ! Vangtùre ! breeng le feu, queek ! breeng le feu ! ”* then turning to me he said, “ Ah, Don Guillerm, that you sit down ; Va ! Don Guillerm, je vais faire pull les bottes. Vangtùre, come Vangtùre ! pull les bottes de Don Guillerm ; Ah, seigneur ! comme qu’il tarde ! ”†

But just as Don Pedro had said this, in ran the quick Ventura, with a light for my segar, a jack for

* For the amusement of our *Spanish* readers, I here give Don Pedro’s actual colloquy—“ Vangtur ! Vangtur ! trae le feu, ligere ! —trae le feu ! ”

† “ Ah, Don Guillerm—Coosted sangt—va—Don Guillerm—je vais faire saque les bottes—Vangtur—Veng, Vangtur—Saque les bottes de Don Guillerm—Ah Seigneur ! Comme il tard ! ”

my boots, and for my feet a pair of huge slippers belonging to mine host, who thus re-commenced:—

“ Va! Don Guillerm! you do fume le cigare; le bon tabac of Paraguay. Ah, Seigneur! (here I lit my segar) Vangtùre! cour, queek! breeng le vin an dee glass; le bon vin; et Vangtùre! breeng le brandee de la France; vite!”*

Back skipped Ventura with wine, French brandy, and glasses; and while, with a profusion of thanks, I kept bowing to Don Pedro, and begging him not to take so much trouble, he pressed me with both hands into a seat beside the wine and brandy, saying, “ Ah, Seigneur! you seet down! I hab le gran plaiseer; oui, monseigneur, le grand honneur that you do come chez moi; oui, Don Guillerm, I am too appèe you to see chez moi.†

Having seated me, therefore, down to my segar and cognac and water (a pleasant afternoon-beverage in a warm climate, *if not made too strong*), the indefatigable hospitality of Don Pedro would

* Va, Don Guillerm—Coosted fume le cigar—le bon tobac de Paraguay—Ah, Seigneur! Y Vangtur! Cour, ligère! trae le vin y le cop—le bon vin—Y Vangtur! trae le guardient de la France—ligère!

† Ah, Seigneur! Coosted sangt (Sientese vmd)—yo tien le grand gust—Si, monseigneur—le grand honneur—Coosted vient à ma caaz—Si, Don Guillerm—Yo sta legrè doosted ver dans ma caaz.”

not allow him to rest long quiet ; he wished to set about getting supper ready.

“ Va ! Don Guillerm,” said he, “ vat you weesh pour le souper ? dee gooze ? dee torkée ? gourd, Don Guillerm, gourd.”* Anything, I said, would do. “ Va !” (his favourite expression),—then he added, “ c’est bon le torkée. Vangtùre ! come Vangtùre ! va vite ! keel dee torkée : gourd, gourd, Vangtùre ; and say to dee cuisinier he make dee good deesh pour le souper.”†

The killing of the fat turkey for supper, I found, was only the commencement of a variety of other preparations on a large scale for the same purpose ; and the volubility with which Don Pedro gave his multifarious orders was responded to with most surprising celerity by the harlequin Ventura. Every now and then, in the midst of his bustle, running out of one room into another, preparing his wine, collecting his dessert, and giving orders to Vangtùre and le cuisinier, Don Pedro would come up to me, and say : “ Ah, mon ami ! dat you do

* Va ! Don Guillerm—Coosted quir cenar ? le paitò—le paivò—gourd, Don Guillerm—gourd.

† “ Va ! c’est bon le paivò—Vangtur—Veng, Vangtur ! va ligere mat le paivo—gourd, gourd, Vangtur—et dig le cuisinier faire l’assad bon pour le cenar.”

ake rest! dat you pardonne me; I av to do all deetings; ah, seigneur!" and at the same time, and in the midst of these apologies, he kept pressing me to "fume le bon cigare," and to keep to his old cognac.

The arrival of a person so important in the eyes of Don Pedro as myself, in a place where there were not more than six or eight families that could boast, as he said, of being "des personnes de distinction," could not, of course, but cause a sensation; and with the *empressement* of a primitive society, the distingués of Goya determined to welcome me on the first evening of my arrival.

Towards eight o'clock, accordingly, the respectable population of old Doña Goya's port began to drop in to Don Pedro's grand salon. The comandante, Major Brest, came first, and he was met by Don Pedro with extraordinary demonstrations of kindness and respect.

"Ah, seigneur comandang," said he, "you do please for walk in;" and after embracing him, he introduced him to me with much ceremony, and with a profusion of compliments to both parties. The comandante, a plain, honest man, although apparently much perplexed both with the etiquette

and harangues of our host, yet seemed to be well accustomed to the concluding point, which was an invitation to supper. "Va! Seigneur Comandang, you do stay to dee souper avec Don Guillem;" and the comandante, settling himself comfortably to do so, sent his orderly to tell his wife and family not to wait for him. He informed me that the governor of Corrientes had strictly charged him to do everything he possibly could for me in Goya; "a command," added Major Brest, politely, "which it was not necessary for his lordship to lay upon me."

After the comandante came the curate, who was likewise received by Don Pedro with his peculiar mixture of politeness and cordiality; that is, with an alternate abundance of bowing and scraping, and of squeezing of the hands, intermixed with kind greetings, uplifted eyes, and many compliments. Then followed "El Señor Juez del distrito," a justice of the peace; two estancieros, who had built themselves small "town houses" in Goya, for the accommodation of the young ladies, their daughters; a small merchant, a rival of Don Pedro's, but on no unfriendly terms with him; and a couple of those nondescripts who "live on their money,"

without any one knowing exactly how it is come by, or whence they draw it. The village, unhappily, it may be thought, for itself, could boast neither of a doctor nor a lawyer. The only person in the community, excepting the curate, who pretended to some erudition, was a reduced Corrientes roué, who acted as the comandante's amanuensis; and the sole son of Esculapius was El Señor Barbero, who aspired to no higher skill than that of bleeding at the arm, shaving, and drawing a tooth.

The parties I have enumerated were all invited to supper, a proposition so congenial with the general feeling, that not one excused himself. A splendid and substantial set-out our host gave us; not only the goose, and the *torkée gourd* (fat), but roast, boiled, and made dishes without end. In helping his guests, aided by Vangtùre, Don Pedro was as indefatigable as in all the rest; and the justice which was done to his eatables and drinkables by the Goya fraternity, convinced me that, if they could not comprehend the niceties of Don Pedro's vernacular, they fully understood the moving rhetoric of his supper table.

He did not bow the last of his company out of

the room till midnight; and then, expressing his satisfaction that he had been able to introduce me to the "personnes de distinction" of Goya, and assuring me that with such only he associated, he renewed his protestations of the sincerest friendship.

But "Va ! Don Guillerm," said he at last, "you take dee rest, you go to coucher. I have dee fear you are fatiguè. To-morrow you go see mes cuirs; ah, Seigneur ! les bons cuirs ! Mais, Vangtùre ! breeng de light for Don Guillerm. Vite, Vangtùre ! ah voila ! Bon repos, mi Seigneur Don Guillerm ; that you rest, that you rest !"*

With these words we parted for the night.

Don Pedro was up long before myself next morning, superintending both his household affairs and his business. The moment I made my appearance, he and Ventura began to bustle about with the same alacrity as the night before. When I entered the salon, and received the hurried but cordial greetings of mine host, he called out, "Vangtùre !

* Va ! Don Guillerm—Coosted descangs—Coosted dorm—Yo està con le mēēd coosted sta cangsad—Demain oosted va ver mes cuirs—Ah, Seigneur ! le bon cuirs ! Mais Vangtur ! trae le vail pour Don Guillerm—ligere Vangtur ! ah voila ! Bon repos, mi Seigneur Don Guillerm—coosted descangss—coosted descangss.

breeng dee tea, dee toast, des œufs ! vite ! et Vangtur ; breeng de col torkée, et le col rosbif ; va, Vangtur ! vite !

A hearty breakfast despatched, we proceeded to Don Pedro's galpones ; and, in truth, to the eye of a South American merchant, they presented a magnificent show. Pile rose upon pile, and Don Pedro's eye sparkled as he pointed out the first-rate quality and capital condition of his hides. He could not have fewer than 25,000, which he had been accumulating for years, and it was evident that taking them down from the piles to *sell* them, was as painful to him as would have been the extraction of his remaining teeth. I knew that in justice the greater proportion of them belonged to our friend Stroud and to others ; but of this little fact Don Pedro had quite lost sight, and the troubles he had gone through on account of the goodly piles before us, no doubt gave him, in his own eyes, a legitimate and undivided right to the property. Of his troubles and his sufferings, he only spoke to me when alone ; but then, pointing always to his cicatrized face, he earnestly told me to beware of the Gauchos. " Ah, Seigneur ! "

he would exclaim, "les Gouches! you take dee care of les Gouches; you do see here dee sabre voons dat have my head de ces barbares! Ah, mon ami! and wat have I no suffer from les gouch! Ah, mon Dieu!" And here the old man would clasp his hands, close his thin lips, and lift up his large blue eyes with the most pitiable expression imaginable. But recovering from this, his melancholy reverie, he would add more cheerfully—"Mais, que faire! que faire! patience, Don Guillem: God have gived me la patience."

We were now about to show Don Pedro a different mode of doing business from that which he had adopted; and as he knew that we were on a different scale, and in a different way from himself, so far from shewing any jealousy of our operations, he earnestly begged that while I was in the port attending to my business I would not leave his house, but make it my residence. In addition to my society, which he professed to like, he felt that he had a better security during my stay with him, owing to our intimate friendship with the governor, which procured us the vigilant protection of the commandante and officers. Business obliged me

subsequently to take a cottage of my own, and although I only moved off two or three hundred yards from Don Pedro, he literally shed tears when I left his large house to take possession of my own hut.

But I must now leave the "Frenchman of Goya," as he was generally called, to give some account of our own proceedings in the port.

There is no part of the world in which the word *revolution* is so much twisted from its real sense, among the important expressions of language, than in South America. A revolution in other countries is something to startle the mind; but with the South Americans, every public disturbance is "a revolution." If one President of a republic be upset by a few influential men, to make way for another, it is called "a *revolution*;" if an officer seize a higher command than his own, by the aid of a squadron of cavalry, it is "*a revolution*;" and if Colonel A. is proclaimed by a town council governor of a province, instead of Colonel B., that also is "a revolution."

In a modified use of the term, according to the fashion of South America, my brother and myself,

aided by Peter Campbell, may be said to have brought about a more remarkable "revolution," in the province of Corrientes, than even our friend the Governor Mendez, when he entered the town triumphantly at the head of his gallant army of thirty men, obliging Governor Blanco to take to the river with his body-guard, consisting of two orderlies, and to make the best of his way to Buenos Ayres.

The "revolution" we brought about was neither warlike nor political in its object; it did not consist in the changing of dynasties, nor in the supplanting of one form of government by the introduction of another. We aimed not at these higher flights of conquering heroes and *soi-disant* patriots. Our revolution was one of a purely domestic and commercial character. We contented ourselves with teaching the people the simple, but not useless, lesson, that the action by which foreigners enriched themselves in their province, produced simultaneously the effect of creating wealth, and of spreading prosperity among themselves.

The foundation of this prosperity was laid when Campbell, as described at the close of Letter VI.,

set off from Corrientes ; and what a goodly edifice was reared upon it in the course of twelve months, we shall show as we trace Campbell's operations and our own.

Yours, &c.,

W. P. R.

LETTER XIII.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Mode of doing Business in Corrientes—Habilitaciones or Credits—**Don Pedro Campbell among the Estancieros, or Country Gentlemen—Among the Gauchos in the Camp—Mercantile Revolution—Don Pedro Marote—Corrientes Caravans.**

THE universal system of doing business in the interior parts of South America, is by giving what are called “habilitaciones,”—that is, advancing to the grower or collector of produce a certain sum in money and goods, which he engages to repay in his produce within a given time, and at a stipulated price. If you want wheat, hides, mineral ores, wool, yerba, tobacco, or any other product of the country, in large quantities, you must advance the money in the first place, and then trust to the honesty of your debtor for fulfilling his part of the contract.

This mode of doing business arises from the farmers and collectors of produce having no capital of their own to work upon; or at least so small a one, that if you only procure what they can collect

with their own funds, your operations are reduced to a scale of insignificance.

This system of advancing, in the first place, with no better security than the sometimes dubious honesty of the contractors, is evidently a hazardous one; because it holds out a temptation to dishonesty; because the South Americans of the class you must employ are improvident and careless about money; and because many of them are addicted to gambling, a vice which they can, by no means, resist, when they find their pockets heavy with doubloons, no matter whether belonging to you or to themselves.

The Creoles who thus took "habilitaciones," always did so at a great disadvantage: they paid high prices for their goods, and got low ones for their produce. In fact they had to pay for the *risk* which their employers ran in trusting them. Many have been ruined in South America by granting extensive habilitaciones or advances; and it will be for the benefit of all parties when a more equal division, or a greater spread of capital, shall banish this system of credit altogether from the country.

Notwithstanding the hazardous nature of these habilitaciones, as we were determined to do a large

business, we had no alternative but to adopt them. But we essentially altered the system in our mode of developing it. We were extremely anxious to get quit of our goods,—no less anxious to procure produce. So we reversed the plan of the Old Spaniards: we gave high prices for hides, and took low ones for goods. This new feature brought men of respectability into play: we looked well to whom we trusted: we had the vigilant, active, and powerful Don Pedro Campbell to “cut the camp,” and see that we had fair play. We ourselves personally superintended the working of the machinery; and as our “habilitados,” or agents, got rich on our bargains, they had an additional stimulus to fulfil their engagements, and to repeat and augment their operations.

It was thus that we induced many small and middling estancieros, or country gentlemen, with goods and money as an habilitacion or advance from us, to return to their estates, and collect hides, skins, horse-hair, and wool. Several of them set off with Campbell himself and his peons. As they came to their abandoned and miserable-looking establishments, Campbell and his men would set about helping them to put their farm-houses into repair; to get their corràles, or pens for cattle

made good; to collect some milch cows and horses; and to gather together a flock of sheep from the ranchos, or peons' huts scattered about. He would here procure from some village a carpenter to mend doors, and set up waggons; and there he would engage to send carts of our own to take away their produce. Finally, seeing them supplied with tobacco, spirits, yerba, salt, and ponchos, the indispensable articles at once of necessity and luxury for the estanciero and his servants, he would then be satisfied that all was there in a right train, and so push on to another estancia to go through the same process. I need scarcely add, that with such energy and perseverance he was almost invariably successful in these operations.

Campbell aroused the small towns and villages, as well as the estancias, from their dormant position into an active pursuit of business. He knew all the inhabitants personally, and he picked out, with much sagacity, those who were likely to serve him best. He made contracts with them, or he drove them into Corrientes or Goya, to replenish their shops from our warehouses, or with the money we advanced to lend increased activity to their *esquinas* or pulperias; the pulpero being the

combined "grocer and spirit dealer" of South America.

The higher class of *estancieros*, seeing the new order of things established, and knowing they had now a sure and profitable market for their hides, were gradually up and stirring, many availing themselves of Don Pedro's help to re-organize their *estancias*, and to collect again their herds of cattle.

No small difficulty was experienced at first in bringing back all the *peons* or *Gauchos* to their old habits of labour and subordination as servants,—so completely had they been demoralized by the lawless life which, as *Artigueño* soldiers, many of them had led. But high wages, regularly paid, worked wonders. In many parts, indeed, the bolder and more reckless of these men would now and then show an inclination to upset the good work which was going forward. But Campbell's sway was omnipotent, and he reduced the worst of them to submission and obedience. His physical strength,—his undaunted, if not ferocious, courage when roused,—his dexterity with his knife, and his ever ready appeal to that, or to his gleaming sabre, cowed all spirits less daring than his own, and left him undisputed master of the field.

If he heard of a quarrel or a fight among these gambling and drunken Gauchos, in a pulperia, he would rush into the midst of the knives which all of them were brandishing. He designated the combatants with all the energy of an Irish accent, "Canalla! thieves! villains! assassins!" he would lay about him with stick, knife, or sabre, whichever came first to his hand. With the quickness of thought he would thus disperse the dismayed crew, and then burst into a horse laugh as he leant on the counter of the pulperia. Such was Don Pedro's mode of reading the riot act in the province of Corrientes.

In these various ways the country, as if by magic, started into industrious life and mercantile activity, in every section of its wide extent. Herds and flocks were gathered together,—thousands and tens of thousands of the wild cattle were slaughtered for their hides; and in all directions the creaking of the large wheels of huge and ponderous wag-gons, laden with the produce of the estancias and villages, as they uninterruptedly traversed the country, gave token of renewed prosperity and peace, where a few months, nay a few weeks, before, all had been rapine, desolation, and decay.

Soon after, as stated in my last letter, I had got comfortably located with Don Pedro Quesnèy at Goya, I found I was likely to have a very busy time of it there. The multifarious operations of Don Pedro Campbell in the "Camp," the many *habilitaciones* given by my brother in Corrientes, and the still greater number which I began to give myself from Goya, the central point of our operations, gradually involved me in an activity of work well suited to the ardour of two-and-twenty years of age.

In the unwearied zeal with which he prosecuted his business, Campbell penetrated into the woods and forests of Curusuquatià,—a wild and unfrequented part of the province, lying towards the Misiones, at an equidistance of 50 or 60 leagues from Corrientes and Goya. He knew a rough old Spaniard who had been long settled in that neighbourhood, and who, by killing cattle on his own estate, and by collecting from others, had gradually got together nearly 10,000 very large hides. But in the hitherto distracted state of the country, the property had lain, and indeed then lay, with him a useless heap of lumber. Neither waggons to hold his hides, nor bullocks to draw them, nor

peons to conduct them, were to be had in the distant region where they were piled ; and anxious as Marote, the proprietor, was about his hides, he was infinitely more so about his personal safety, fearing, from day to day, that the Artigueños, to possess themselves of his property, would fall upon him and deprive him of his life, as they had attempted to do with his old acquaintance Quesnèy. With feelings, therefore, of unalloyed satisfaction did Marote at one and the same moment see Campbell alight at his door, and hear him say he had come to purchase his hides. The bargain was soon struck,—for Campbell offered to buy the hides on the spot, and to pay his friend for them when, how, and where he pleased. A short and simple, but defined, contract was drawn out, and Campbell galloped off with it in triumph to Goya.

This bold purchase,—not for its amount, but for the labour and difficulty involved in the transport of the hides,—made it more than ever clear that we must become, not only the hide-merchants, but the carriers of the province ; and we forthwith began to organize this essential part of our adventure. By dint of money, and of indefatigable exertions on the part of Campbell, we put into active opera-

tion three of the best-appointed troops of waggons that had ever been seen in the province. We procured the best of these unwieldy vehicles or covered carts,—amazingly strong, capacious, and water tight, to prevent any damage from coming to the hides either by rain, or by immersion of the carts in water. Each troop consisted of eighteen to twenty of these; of about three hundred of the largest and finest tame bullocks, and twenty-five to thirty good saddle-horses; of a head Capataz or superintendent of the troop, with one or two assistants; of five or six bueyeros or drivers of the relay bullocks, and for each cart one driver, who, perched on the front of it, directed with his picana,* or long cane-goad, the movements of the six oxen which he had in yoke.

* The picana is a Tacuara or cane, thick at the end or root, and running to a point, about eighteen to twenty feet in length. It is slung horizontally, and reaches from the cart to the fore-quarter of the leading bullocks. It is pointed with iron at the end, and to the part which is over the hind-quarter of the two *middle* bullocks is fastened a short stick depending downwards, and pointed also with iron. The driver guides or moves the picana by holding the thick end in his right hand, and he can so swing it as to prick the middle bullocks when he pleases with the attached depending point just mentioned, and the leaders with the point of the picana itself. In his left hand he holds a short iron-pointed cane, with which he pricks and guides the two wheeler-bullocks yoked to the cart.

Our three capataces were, in their line, the finest fellows we could pick out in the province; and from their having, on the other hand, our orders to pay the highest wages for the best men as their assistants and peons, our three troops of carts were like three crack regiments in the army of a nation.

The purchase and out-fit of these three troops of waggons cost about five thousand pounds, and we worked them at a monthly expense of about five hundred.

You must not suppose that the business of a carrier is so easily conducted in South America as in England. The operations and movements of our troops of carts were not at all like those of the vans and heavy waggons of Messrs. Pickford and Co. here. Ours might be more aptly compared to the dragging of heavy artillery, attached to an army, through a difficult and harassing country; and where the labours of each day terminated, not by putting up for the night at the "Marquis of Granby," the "Red Lion," or the "Bedford Arms," with "refreshment for men and horses" inviting the jog-trot waggoner to rest, but by bivouacking under the open canopy of heaven.

Nothing could be more picturesque than one of the long journeys of a troop of these carts, on their return homewards, laden with hides. Let us take, as an illustration of them, a trip of one of our tropas from Marote's estancia in Curusuquatià, in the rainy season, to Goya.

Observe the Capataz,—the Commander-in-chief, —mounted on a strong, handsome, and well-fed horse, as he sips his last maté at the door of the estanciero's abode, from which he is about to take his departure, chatting the while with the good man of the house and his family, quite at his ease, yet watching, with eagle eye, all the movements of his men, as they busily prepare for a start. See him at last courteously take leave, and giving the word to *move*; observe him set out on horseback, at the head of the troop, grave, sedate, and smoking his segar. He has the appearance of half the South American yeoman, half the military man. He is dressed in a plain blue jacket, woollen trowsers and potro boots. His waistcoat is red plush, with metal buttons, and a broad and fine leather belt girt about his loins is fastened in front by two Spanish dollar pieces and a strong silver link, after the fashion of shirt sleeve-

buttons, as worn in the olden time : in this girdle are stuck a formidable horse pistol, on one side, and a knife, with a silver embossed handle, on the other. He wears heavy silver spurs, has a silver rebénque slung from his right wrist, and on his left arm is hung a poncho of Indian manufacture. His head is bound round with a silk handkerchief, over which he wears a small hat, fastened with a slip of black velvet under his chin, and thus completing the costume of Don Manuel the Capataz, whilom a small but reputable estanciero of the province of Corrientes.

See, following close upon the Capataz, the two leading bullocks, and after them the four others of the first cart ; their necks all bent in patience to the yoke, as they give their united strength to the burthen they have to draw, and with which they sturdily though slowly advance.

Behold the *carreta* or waggon itself ! Its wheels, mounted on an enormous wooden axle, are alone of giant weight, height, and strength, and rough and rudely hewn. How loudly and harshly they creak as they turn round ! and how *they*, too, seem to labour with the moveable storehouse which, sustained by their axle, is heaped between them !

Look at the dexterous driver, with what ease he seems to guide his lengthened team, as they drag along the ponderous vehicle in front of which he sits !

Another *carreta* follows close upon the first, and like to it in every respect and particular. Another and another, in a long and unbroken line, the end of which the eye can scarcely reach. Galloping up and down the line to see that all goes well, are Don Manuel's mounted assistants or lieutenants, their *lasos* to their *recados* or saddles, and their *bolas* slung round their waists, both ever ready for every emergency, and both used in many different ways. Finally, and bringing up the rear, come the unyoked bullocks, driven and kept together by five or six *Gauchos*, well mounted, and dressed in their *chiripà* or kilt, cotton drawers, *potro* boots, jacket, poncho, and little straw hat. Each attends sedulously to his own duty, while order, discipline, and regularity pervade the whole.

Yours, &c.,

W. P. R.

LETTER XIV.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

More of the South American Caravan—It sets out—Crossing a River—The Encampment—The Repose.

THE descendants of the old Spaniards in the River Plate provinces, coming under the denomination of the “Country people,” are strictly nomadic in their habits; and accordingly they are perhaps never more completely in their element than when performing a long journey such as the one I have commenced describing at the close of my last letter. They like not systematic, plodding, moderate labour: they must have excitement or repose. They want something picturesque; some stirring scene; a great and pressing difficulty which calls into play their physical and mental powers; and in such emergency they shine. Their patience, fortitude, and courage; their ingenuity, and bodily exertions, are not to be tired out till they have accomplished their purpose: and then, in a total repose from labour, they enjoy the fruits, as it were, of their victory.

But let us return to Don Manuel's journey with his troop of eighteen carts, from Curusuquatià, as, so far, already described.

His route lay partly through deep wood and forest belts, skirting the banks of rivers; partly through open country composed alternately of what are there called *lomas* and *bañados*, or rising grounds and marshes. In summer the passage is tolerably easy, because then the rivers are low, and although presenting a rough and uneven surface, the swamps are dried up. But in winter the rills are converted into streamlets, the streamlets into rivers, and the rivers into torrents. The swamps become lakes with a sinking muddy bottom, and even in the uplands, the waters having stagnated in the ruts, these must be abandoned to seek a new road through the high and tufty grass which everywhere covers the surface of the open plain. It may readily be supposed that a journey of sixty leagues across such country as I here describe, with eighteen carts, each weighing, with its load, about two tons, is only to be accomplished with incredible toil; and such indeed is the fact.

In passing through a wood, Don Manuel, now no longer keeping at the head of his troop, but

anxiously reconnoitring the roads in advance, would come to a place rendered impassable for his heavy train, and then instantly all disposable hands, converted into pioneers, were at work, clearing away trees and opening up a new track to avoid the difficult pass. Here, in spite of every precaution, a cart would perhaps break down, or an axle-tree give way; and then his men were, with equal celerity, called on to exert their ingenuity as wheelwrights; and anon, the lame carriage being once more set on its legs, the tropa would proceed forward.

Emerging from the wood, "with painful steps and slow," behold them, after enjoying for some time the comparative ease of the upland roads, commence the traversing of a wide and far-spread bañado or marsh, now completely laid under water. How the poor bullocks labour through the soft and sinking bottom! and with what animation the *picador*, that is the waggoner, though literally the *goader*, urges his team to their task! Ever and anon they are obliged to turn the cart aside from the deepening rut they make, and open up new ground; and it would be difficult to say whether the patience and perseverance with which the

task is accomplished, is greatest on the part of the oxen or the men.

But the great impediment to the progress of the tropa on the journey lay in their having to cross a swollen and unfordable river, of which there are two or three falling into the Paraná, between Curusu-quatià and Goya. Here commences a busy scene. Bridges in that country are unknown. In some places, to be sure, there are ferries and rafts to carry produce and passengers across; but during temporary floodings of the rivers, these rafts must be constructed by the passengers themselves.

In this case Don Manuel's pioneers, with hatchets and other tools, set themselves to construct the raft or *balsa*, composed of the trunks of trees firmly knit together by hide-ropes. The carts are then unloaded by the river side, and successively the hides, the skins, the carts themselves, the bullocks and the men are ferried over. The horses, having previously been unsaddled, are driven into the stream, across which they boldly swim, and stand on the opposite side, allowing themselves to be re-saddled by their riders.

In the case of crossing a fordable river, the bullocks were pricked smartly into the water, and

each cart, as it plunged into the stream, was surrounded by the peons on horseback, who in every way urged on the bullocks to drag it through quickly. Some succeeded ; but it often happened that on the opposite shelving banks, the wheels got stuck so fast in the bottom, that all the efforts of the bullocks were unavailing to bring their load on dry land. In this case two, and more frequently four, additional bullocks were yoked to the waggon, making ten in all. As the difficulty of extricating it increased, so did the exertions of the men to surmount the difficulty. The Capataz, as an energetic leader, gave unity to their efforts. The greater number of them, leaving their horses, would get at the sides of the waggon and behind it, and give their athletic arms to the wheels, and their brawny shoulders to the back of the unwieldy vehicle. When, in this way, all was prepared for a mighty struggle, Don Manuel, the Capataz, would call out loudly, “ A una ! ” that is, “ All together ! ” and then, with a simultaneous shout which rent the air, the ponderous body was acted upon by all : every sinew of every bullock was strained to the effort, —every muscular power of the men was put forth —the halloing was redoubled ; and hark ! the crazy

wheels of the labouring waggon yield to the impulse; the huge body groans and moves, and amidst the loudest huzzas and almost frantic cries of the troop, it is carried safely to the dry bank.

It must be understood that the tropa was the itinerant *house* of the Capataz and his men. They carried with them everything that was necessary for their comfort, their convenience, and their luxury. As far as these went, it was a matter of total indifference to them whether they bivouacked in the open country, or came to a stop for the night at an estancia. The additional pleasure they had in the latter case was that of enlarging the circle of their gossip; of their having some pretty and perhaps favourite female listeners to their recent exploits and adventures; or of their music being turned to account by those who were inclined (and who of them were not?) to trip it on the "light fantastic toe."

The admixture of coquetting and love-making was no doubt the most pleasing to those engaged in them, but the bivouac was the most picturesque.

The carts being drawn up in the form of a semi-circle, pretty close together, but so placed as to allow of their being simultaneously yoked in the morning, see, the bullocks are let loose and sent to

pasture, the horses are unsaddled, and preparations for the rest of the day and night are commenced.

Mixed with the tame bullocks is a certain number of others, not broken in, which the Capataz has purchased for the subsistence of his men on their journey. They are the best fed and finest animals he can find in a country teeming with a capital breed. Finer flavoured or juicier meat than theirs is not to be found in any part of the world, not even in Leadenhall market. One of these animals, accordingly, is selected, killed at a little distance from the circle, and cut up by the most expert butchers (a trade familiar to every Gaucho) in the tropa.

Large fires, which, in the mean time, have been kindled on the ground, within the circle, begin to send forth their crackling noise and cheerful blaze, strongly illuminating and defining every object around as the light of day recedes.

The first enjoyment of the Gauchos after hard labour is their *màté* or tea. As soon, therefore, as their work is done, and all the paraphernalia of their waggons "made snug," the rough and bat-

tered calderas* are in requisition, and anon all are to be seen filling their *mâté* cups,—sipping the contents through their *bombillas* or tubes; here sauntering about, there sitting by the fire on a dried ox skull, and smoking their little paper segars.

This is the prelude to the more substantial meal of supper. Over the fires are placed about half-a-dozen *asados* or roasts, consisting of all the prime parts of the ox, run upon long wooden or iron skewers, which are stuck into the ground close by the fire, and hang over it at an angle of forty-five degrees. A number of the men, converted into cooks, watch over the culinary process with scrupulous care, and the nicest tact: the savoury smell which fills the air, as it meets the nostrils of the hungry expectants, whets

* A tea-kettle, or rough and clumsy copper vessel, supplied originally from Catalonia, but which the Birmingham manufacturers soon set about imitating. They sent them out at first of a greatly improved appearance, bright and shiny like our own; but such gimcracks were repudiated by the *Gauchos*;—they would have none of the polish, none of the affected delicacy of contour of the Brummagem ware, at any price. Profiting by this experience, our manufacturers sent out fac-similes of the rough and weatherbeaten-looking old Catalonian; and then succeeding in driving the legitimates from the field, they have ever since supplied by thousands the South American demand for Catalonia calderas.

farther their already sharpened appetites. Even the grave and phlegmatic Don Manuel begins to exhibit signs of gastronomic impatience. Hides are placed around to serve as couches, if not as chairs; the company is formed into small picnic parties of three or four each; every one is ready, knife in hand; the salt is sprinkled over each roast as it is placed in the centre of each little knot of gourmands; and then, with fingers used as forks, and with knives as sharp as their own hunger, the Gauchos commence their glorious feast. They have nothing but the beef and the salt. They care for nothing more: and the most inveterate frequenter of the Lord Mayor's sumptuous turtle feasts could not go through the demolishing process with more intense relish than that with which the Gaucho, in the plenitude of his digestive powers, eats his still more sumptuous and savoury asado.

Bread "*à discretion*" is not more indispensable to the Parisian, than beef "*à discretion*" to the Gaucho; and washing it down, as he does, with the healthful beverage which he draws from the cool clear spring nearest to the spot where he sits, you would be astonished to see the quantum of beef

which he considers necessary for the alimentary wants of his vigorous and healthy frame.

The cloth being drawn,—that is to say, the skewers being removed; the knives all wiped, replaced in their scabbards, and once more stuck in their belts or potro boots; the fire, brought into one, being replenished with wood till its crackling blaze and innumerable sparks cast reflective scintillations on the glassy surface of the river, on the banks of which they sit,* and throw a deep red glare on all the objects and the atmosphere which surround them; Don Manuel having remounted, and, with the vigilance of a commander-in-chief, having gone to see that every appointment is complete,—that his bullocks and horses are cared for as well as his men,—that the latter have left “proper *things* in proper places” for the morrow’s journey,—and that no difficulty can interfere with the orders which he has given for a start at dawn:—all these matters being arranged, the com-

* I have mentioned elsewhere (see “Letters on Paraguay,” first edition, pp. 224 and 227) that these fires also serve to keep the tigers of the woods at bay. Neither the lion nor the tiger ever venture into the open plains, although the tiger-cat and dog-lion often hide and prowl about them, seeking smaller prey in the high grass and rushes.

pany, wrapping their ponchos around them, make one circle about the blazing piles of wood; and resuming first their segars, and then their mâtés, feel that their enjoyment is complete.

Where a number of these Gauchos thus congregate, they have generally a select few better adapted than the rest to give hilarity and enjoyment to the evening. They have their *graciosos*,—the Yoricks of the South American peasantry, who are “wont to keep the company in a roar,” by their native wit, their drolleries, their stories, and practical jests. They have their vocalists and their never failing *guitarreros*, who blend their music together in the wild *tristes* of the country, or in the boleros and other lively songs imported from Spain; to all of which the admiring auditors listen with unfeigned delight, and which they repay with “vivas!” from the very heart.

The segars smoked,—the mâtés no longer relished,—the *graciosos* beginning to yawn,—the singers nodding,—the guitars put away,—sentinels placed to watch the carts and the fires,—and sleep stealing over the senses of the general body—all, save the sentinels, go to rest. If very cold, they betake themselves to the carts; if mild, they get

their recados for their pillows, cover themselves with a blanket or their ponchos, stretch themselves out, with the sky as their canopy, on the hides on which they have been reclining, and in deep and unbroken slumber enjoy a repose which a bed of down does not always bring, nor the diadem of a monarch always secure.

Your's, &c.,

W. P. R.

LETTER XV.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Journey from Buenos Ayres to Goya with George Washington
Tuckerman and Philip Parkin, Esquires.

London, 1842.

I REMAINED in Buenos Ayres only ten days, the necessity for my return to Corrientes, with a fresh supply of gold, being urgent. I therefore stepped into my old lumbering carriage, drawn as usual by six horses, managed by a coachman and four postillions, having my rouleaus of doubloons carefully stowed away in two portmanteaus, placed as fixtures in the carriage, and watched by myself and my dog. My pistols were loaded,—my double-barrel, too; and all was prepared, in case of need, for a fight on the Pampas, before I delivered up my treasure.

Having, in the Letters on Paraguay, so fully described the different modes of Pampa travelling, I shall not now repeat the tale; but I cannot pass over, without some notice, the travelling companion,

who now tenanted with me, in common, one-half of my vehicle.

His name was Philip Parkin ; his designation Esquire. Born in Surrey, he was Cockney-bred. He *was* (poor fellow ! he *is* no more) a little dapper natty man, with a sufficiently large aquiline nose, and rather scanty crop of silk-looking hair. He dressed at the top of the fashion, either in fine doe skins and Hoby's tops, or in the boot-maker's Hessians and tassels, over tight cord pantaloons, white or buff. His chain and seals were beautiful, not to say gaudy. His silver-handled whip was conspicuous. He always wore jockey-spurs ; and having learnt, though a Cockney, to ride, he looked, when mounted in his best style, like one of your most knowing men of the turf at Newmarket. He rode a white charger, which every one knew as well as they knew himself ; and when at obtuse angles he pirouetted along the streets, he made such a prancing and capering sideways, that people were wont to shelter themselves between the posts and the houses, or to run into the shops whenever they saw Don Felipe coming on his "*cavalllo blanco*." His satirical friends used to allege that the only Spanish words with which

he was acquainted were those which designated himself and his horse : “ *Don Felipe*,” Master Philip ; “ *cavallo blanco*,” white horse. Nobody ever thought, however, of calling him either Master Philip or Mr. Parkin ; it was invariably Don Felipe, except when occasionally by his intimates he was yclept PHIL. And this they intended for a pun, alleging that he was for ever filling his glass. He was passionately addicted to wine, and not less devoted to the fair sex ; so that in time he came to get the additional name of Duke of Queensberry, *alias* OLD Q., although he was not twenty-five years of age.

Having been brought up in strictly religious principles, he passed the Sunday in his own room, nor could any power move him out of his house, nor any his *cavallo blanco* out of the stable. It was alleged that the horse knew as well as his master that Sunday was the day that followed Saturday.

Don Felipe was joked by the men, smiled at by the ladies ; but by no one laughed at so heartily as by himself, when good-naturedly selected by a friend for a joke. His intellect, if ever he had any, lay hid, like a light, under a bushel. It was

a bushel of good nature; and this, with his awkwardness in the dance (for he never could catch the waltz step), his pouting smiles, and bland obsequious manners, made him a welcome guest at the Tertulia, especially after he had taken a bottle of claret. To see him then select the most elegant woman in the room, Miss Oromì, for instance, and, setting at defiance all deference to the piano, dance with her a *minuet de la cour*, was a rare treat. It was not rare in one sense of the word; for the worse he danced, and this was every night worse than another, the more he loved to exhibit; and much was he flattered when his friends told him he was improving in his step.

With this companion, and indeed old friend,—he, like myself, laden with rouleaus, and bent on speculation to Corrientes, I stepped into the hide-bound carriage, and off we drove, Don Felipe half seas over.

At every post-house to which we came he paid his dumb devoirs of gesticulation to every lady of every shade and tinge of colour. He was often tiresome to *them*, always amusing to *me*;

and he served to beguile the tedium of the long Pampa stages. At length we reached Santa Fé, where George Washington Tuckerman, with his wonted impatience, was awaiting our arrival, and trembling in his shoes lest the doubloons which I had for him should be taken by thieves, and thus his prospects for life, in union with his dearest Charlotte, be ruined. His joy on seeing me, and learning that all was safe, was immense,—his gratitude unbounded. After a sojourn of only three days among the Santafecinos, we anew examined our rouleaus, and put them into long canvass bags, so that they looked like large German sausages.

I put mine round the waists and into the portmanteaus of two trusty servants, not liking to be either burthened with their weight nor chafed by their friction. Don Felipe and Don Korkey, more cautious, or more afraid, being not so much men of the road as myself, insisted on carrying their less bulky treasure round their own waists, and thus rode with weight, which, though well enough for a two mile heat, is not quite so well for ninety miles a-day in Entre Rios. They arrived, accordingly, at

Goya, jaded to death and all over bruises. There we took up our quarters with Don Pedro Quesnèy, found my brother, and were alarmed at midnight in the way which will be related in the subsequent letter.

Your's, &c.

J. P. R.

LETTER XVI.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Commencement of active Operations—Mosquito Sport and Slaughter—Don Pedro Quesnèy once more on the Boards—An Arrival at Goya—The Supper—A Scene of some Excitement—The Alarm—Don Felipe Parkin—A Disturbance—The Alarm unriddled and accounted for—G. W. Tuckerman's Courage fails him.

THE rapidity with which our gold and goods,—distributed on every side with some judgment, but with no niggard hand,—restored the province of Corrientes to active prosperity and to general security of life and property, was not a little surprising. In August or September of 1815, the whole lay prostrate and devastated, under the pestilential sway of the Artigueño marauders: in January following,—that is, in about four months afterwards,—no trace of the havoc they had made, nor of the desolation which they had carried to many a hearth, was to be seen.

After I had made various preliminary arrangements in Goya, it became necessary that I should

return to Corrientes to complete many of them there: and finding that we should have frequent journeys to perform between the capital and the port, I was desirous of bringing the trip within the compass of one day's gallop. This was not to be done by the post route, where the horses were mediocre, and the delays in procuring them at the different post-houses sometimes great.

But from Corrientes to Goya there was now an unbroken line of estancias in full operation, under the personal inspection of their owners, all of whom, I may say, were in our own pay. Giving them notice, therefore, of the day on which I intended to set out, each had two or three of his best horses tied up at the door, ready, with a guide, to be saddled on the arrival of myself and servant; and in this way we generally contrived, by starting early and arriving late, to do the fifty-two leagues, or about 150 miles, within the day. My brother adopted and pursued the same plan, although his journeys were less frequent than mine. In that hot climate it was an excessively fatiguing operation, and indeed was never accomplished but by some of the Gauchos accustomed to the task and by ourselves.

After my brother's departure for Buenos Ayres, Mr. Postlethwaite was the efficient manager of our affairs in Corrientes, and I was, therefore, left at liberty to return immediately to Goya.

The polite circles of Corrientes could not conceive how I should prefer the society of the few rustics of "the port," to the fashionable allurements of the capital. As in every other metropolis that I have known, the gentlemen, and still more the ladies of Corrientes, thought that beyond the precincts of the city all was tedium, dulness, and vulgarity; and such was the idea they entertained of the delights of Goya, that in the course of my P. P. C. visits,—not paid there through the quick medium of an embossed card, but by a gossip of a couple of hours duration,—one of the young belles of the place, on my asking her "what I could send her from Goya?" archly replied, "You may send me, Sir, the only thing which I imagine the port possesses,—send me a pound of *mosquitos*."

I mention the commission thus given to me, because, in order to show you what the Paraná sometimes is, I have to add, that to her no small astonishment and dismay, I literally fulfilled,

the request which the pretty Doña Dolores Madridiaga had made of me. Tempted by a fast-sailing vessel ready to leave, and a fine northerly breeze, I started on the occasion in question by water for Goya. The first day we made a fine run; the second day we lost our breeze, and in the evening, not far from Goya, we were, from the intricacy and danger of the navigation on a dark night, obliged to tie up to a tree, near to a marshy bank of the river. Not a breath of air stirred the leaves,—the sky was clouded,—the atmosphere was close and sultry in the extreme; and we were soon made to see and to feel that there was in store for us, for the night, an amount of misery and anguish of which words can convey but a faint and imperfect idea.

The fact, you know, is, that travellers see strange things; and so you must not fancy there is any exaggeration in what I am going to tell you of the mosquitos, on, to me, this memorable occasion. After the sun went down, and the shades of night began to deepen around us, those terrible enemies gradually brought their forces to bear upon us, and by nine o'clock the battle raged at its height. The first grand attack was on the cabin,

where they made a charge on the candle, so impetuous as instantly to extinguish it. We were accordingly very soon forced from this stronghold, and it was kept in possession during the night by some hundreds of thousands of our subtle enemy. Rushing on deck, we maintained from eight o'clock, P.M., till about four, A.M., next morning, a manful fight with myriads of our foes; and knowing that a great diversion would be caused in our favour by *lights*, we placed two large tin lanterns at the extremities of the quarter deck, leaving the doors of them open. Two of our gallant crew were placed over these lanterns to relight the candles as they were repeatedly extinguished by the dead and dying bodies of our uncountable assailants. We stood, of course, during the night on the defensive: spite of the heat we put on strong boots and gloves, and armed ourselves with large and heavy towels. With these we walked backwards and forwards on the deck, clearing the atmosphere around us of the bloodthirsty mosquitos. A mighty host of them fell, and at last the main body, which had been constantly reinforced from the marsh, drew off toward the dawn in many a dense phalanx. On our part there was not a little blood

spilt; the poisoned darts, or stings, of our enemy had taken direful effect on our faces, and, spite of all our precautions, on other parts of our bodies; so that in the morning our features, swollen as they were with the wounds inflicted on us, were scarcely recognizable.

When I contemplated the heaps of slain which filled the lanterns and covered the deck, I recollected my charming young friend's commission,—had the mosquitos carefully collected,—and, making a parcel of them, I sent them off in the morning, with a detailed account of the terrible affray in which our enemies had fallen.

On landing at Goya, Don Pedro Quesnèy received me with his accustomed cordiality and politeness, and Vangture was in requisition as usual. After the first bustle of my arrival was over, he sat down by my side, took my hand in his, and opening his large blue eyes, with an air of overstrained sentimentality which gave to his countenance a look of almost comic sadness, and “Ah, mon ami!” said he, “I vas too happee you to see vance more; I am triste tout le temps dat you are above in de ville; for you do see, Don Guillerm, that I do cherche les gens de distinction,—les per-

sonnes de la bonne educacion comme vous.” (I made a bow.) “Ah, mon ami! dat I do *hate* le gauch! mala gens! mala gens! and I have dee *feer* of de gauch. I am seul—seul ici! wid Vangtur et mes esclaves. And I *like* dee good companee—Ah seigneur! que faire! que faire! But I am too happee—too happee to see you—oui mi seigneur Don Guillerm!”* After this flattering expression of his sadness during my absence, and of his happiness to see me once more, Don Pedro told me that rumours were afloat of an intended descent of the Indians of San Geronimo, a point of the Gran Chaco, where they had extensive *tolderias* or wigwams, nearly opposite Goya. He said he thought the comandante was on the look out, but poor Don Pedro himself was dreadfully alarmed, and it required all the little rhetoric I possessed to restore him to some comparative ease of mind.

* Here is Don Pedro's original:—“Ah! mon amēēg—que yo sta lègrè doostèd ver—yo stōōv trist, tout le temps coosted stà resté dans la ville. Coosted ve, Don Guillerm, que yo boosk les gens de distinction—les personnes de la bonne educacion, comoosted. Ah, mi amēēg! que yo aborresh le gauch! mala gens! mala gens! et yo sta con le mēēd de le gauch. Yo sta seul—seul ici—avec Vangtur et mes esclaves: et yo goost de le bon compagnon. Ah, Seigneur! que haceir! que haceir! mais yo sta lègrè—lègrè doosted ver—si mi Seigneur Don Guillerm.”

I was now expecting my brother from Buenos Ayres, on his way to Corrientes; and, as the lower provinces were still in a very distracted and unsafe state, I looked to his coming from Santa Fé by the river, in our own vessel the San José, the more so that he had with him a large sum of money.

Four nights after my own arrival, however, at Goya, as I sat with Don Pedro, partaking of an early supper, (our *dinner* hour was one o'clock,)—the doors standing open on account of the great heat of the weather,—we heard several horsemen in the distance, galloping towards the house, and presently the clattering of sabres was very audible as the party approached. Don Pedro turned deadly pale, and stood for a moment terror stricken. But on my rising hastily up, and saying, “Oh! Don Pedro, here are travellers,”—(I confess I was a little nervous myself as to what *class* of travellers they might turn out to be,)—he somewhat recovered himself, and followed me at a respectful distance, as I went to the little gate of his front enclosure. I had not been there a second, when I told Don Pedro I heard my brother’s voice. The announcement acted like an electric shock on Don Pedro. All

his impatient bustle was in a moment upon him. He did not perceive that his *hic et ubique* valet was close at his heels, but instantly raising his voice, he called "Vangture! Vangture! Vite! make dee souper again—Va, Vangture! keel dee torkee—and dee goose—Vite!—Ah Seigneur!"

With these words the formidable cavalcade which my brother had brought with him was at the door; and the moment he had alighted and shaken hands with me, Don Pedro gave him an affectionate embrace. "Ah, Seigneur Don Juan, (*Shuang*, he pronounced the name)—Mon ami! dat you are ver vellcomb. I am too happee you to see. You do com in. Venez, venez, Don Shuang—you do sleep to-night chez moi." He was then introduced to Mr. Philip Parkin, who, as will be stated, accompanied my brother; and then Don Pedro recognized his old acquaintance, Don Jorge Washington Tuckerman, and the embraces were renewed; and Don Pedro's delight was in proportion to the fear which he had at first entertained of the character of his visitors.

The travellers had three men-at-arms, sturdy and confidential fellows; who, nevertheless, with their swarthy features, their jet black whiskers,

beards, and mustachios powdered with dust—their Gaucho costumes, and their pistols, sabres, and carbines, looked much more like banditti than quiet servants. Then there were two postillions, with huge portmanteaus strapped behind them to their recados; and our three visitors themselves were armed to the teeth, and looked nearly as uncouth, in their great broad brimmed straw hats and ponchos, as their armed followers themselves.

Having alighted at once from their reeking steeds, their recados, with all their cumbrous trappings, their arms, portmanteaus, and accoutrements, were dragged, by the heavily spurred men-at-arms, into Don Pedro's saloon, and there heaped up in piles.

Don Pedro was in his glory. Now he embraced one of his friends; now he called for Vangture, and gave him a dozen of orders at once. The cook flurried about, and Vangture was in five different places at the same moment. The men-at-arms and the postillions divided their time betwixt their horses in the corràles, and their mâtès, and segars, and asados in the kitchen. Beds were made up,—a new supper was prepared, whilst brandy and water and Buenos Ayres news

engaged us in the sala. My brother, an old stager, lolled about at his ease, and joked with Don Pedro, and asked him how Doña Serafina was? And Don Pedro thereupon put his right hand on Don Shuang's mouth, and the forefinger of his left on his own, and shook his head, and smiled very knowingly; while poor Philip Parkin and the sentimental Tuckerman, who had never performed so long and rapid a journey before, were evidently much galled with their exertions. They had ridden from the Bajada, a distance of 150 leagues,* in little more than four days, under a scorching sun; so that, tired as they were, they were too sore to rest; though, as we have all somehow a great disinclination to be convicted of saddle-sickness, they were engaged in hiding theirs from observation by a sort of rueful merriment, which only heightened (such is the unfeeling nature of man!) the real glee of the other parties present.

By ten o'clock, a new, abundant, and tempting supper was smoking on the table. There were the never-failing paivò and paitò gourd (fat duck and turkey) and many other savoury things, which for a time cast all recollection of personal incon-

* 450 miles.

venience from the minds of Tuckerman and Parkin, who had seen nothing like this entertainment during their long and harassing journey. Don Shuang declared that he had never sat down to such a supper in his life; and then Don Pedro, pressing his hands together, and looking at my brother with an expression of the highest sentimental affection, said "Ah, Seigneur! dat you do eat à discretion! You do conseedare dat you are chez vous. Prenez, donc, Don Shuang, prenez dee bress of dee torkèe—Va! C'est bon! C'est bon!" In this way Don Pedro not only pressed Don Shuang, but his other guests, to eat of every thing at table. As the supper advanced, the hilarity increased; and a fine under current of amusement was to be found in the intercourse which was gradually established between Don Pedro and Parkin. The latter, notwithstanding his long residence in South America, had never contrived to pick up much Spanish, and of French he was altogether ignorant; so that he comprehended not a word of Don Pedro's peculiar idiom, but was himself equally unintelligible to his host. Good-natured nods and signs were brought in to assist the hidden meaning of words,

and dumb show did more for them than the powers of speech. Yet each believed the other to be the sole offender against the noble Spanish idiom. "Ah, Seigneur!" said Don Pedro, "I am *faché* dat mi Seigneur Don Phillipe not speak dee Spanish tong,"—a lamentation over Don Felipe's ignorance of good Castilian, which called up from him an impatient "What does he say? What *does* he say? is'nt it strange that he should not be able either to speak or understand Spanish?"

Our party in the saloon broke up before midnight, and Vangture showed our guests where they were to sleep. In the large, and it might be called state, bedroom, which I had occupied, my brother was lodged for the night; and in an adjoining apartment, into which my own opened, two capital beds were made up for Tuckerman and Don Felipe. My brother had ten thousand dollars with him in gold, Tuckerman four thousand, and Parkin three thousand,—all which sums were carefully packed away in belts made for the purpose, and deposited under the pillows of the respective owners. I must observe, that in my room, which had a cool aspect, stood, on a wooden tripod, a tall earthen jar, with a cover to it, which was

lifted off by a wooden peg inserted in the centre of the cover. The jar was always filled with cold water, the greatest of luxuries in so warm a climate as that of Goya.

The fatigues of the day, and the convivialities of the night, soon sent our travellers to sound repose. But the excitement of the evening, the pleasure of seeing my brother in safety, after a somewhat perilous journey, the varied news he had brought me, including, the most highly prized of all in a foreign and distant land, news and long letters from *home*,—all kept me awake for a length of time; and it must have been past two o'clock in the morning before I sunk into sleep.

Presently I began to dream of strange noises, and of my inability to move to the door, to ascertain what they were. The night-mare effort of Queen Mab to oppose the disturbers of my rest lasted for a few minutes, when at length, in one violent struggle, I released myself from sleep, and found that the noises I had heard were not at all of a fancied nature. Don Pedro was thumping with his hand, and with nervous rapidity, at my bed-room door, which was locked, and the first words I heard from him were "Don Guillerm!

Don Guillerm! Tocka le cash! tocka le cash! coosted levang—pour l'amour de Dieu, coosted levang! Mi amee—legère! legère! que viang les gens de San Geronomié!

This adjuration on the part of Don Pedro, that I should instantly get up, as the Indians were upon us, was uttered with all the energy which terror could lend to Don Pedro's voice. "Tocka le cash! Tocka le cash!" he continued—"Mon Dieu! les gens de San Geronomié!"

"Tocka le cash!" in Don Pedro's vocabulary, meant "tocan la caxa,"—they beat the drum,—or they are beating to arms. But Parkin, also suddenly aroused from sleep, (and I dare say from a dream of an uneasy *mancarron*,*) just catching the words "tocka le cash," started up in affright, and vociferated in his turn, "Mercy upon us! Robertson,—he is calling to us to take care of the cash. There are robbers or Artigueños in the house!"

Poor Philip, of the true Bob Acres fraternity, whose courage, when danger is near, oozes out at

* The expressive name of a lame, halting, high-going, worn-out hack.

the palms of their hands, was by this time on his feet, and, from hearing all the scuffle and noise outside, in an agony of fright he had grasped his belt of doubloons. Bewildered in his imagination, and losing all recollection of where he was, he groped his way into my room, which by this time I had evacuated. But at the door, with a pistol in each hand, stood my brother, ready to defend his "cash;" and having accidentally placed his hat on the peg of the cover of the tall jar standing on the tripod, and thrown his poncho over it at the same time, it assumed, in a dimly borrowed light, coming from the sala, much the appearance of another armed man, placed in the gloom against the wall, tall, grim, and erect.

At any rate, Parkin, full of apprehensive terrors, took the jar for a robber; and to throw a fearful glance at it, and to drop on his knees before it, was, in point of time, one and the same action.

"Oh, for the love of Heaven!" exclaimed Philip, "do not murder us! we surrender! Here is all my money!" (it was all the poor fellow had in the world) "take it,—but oh, for the sake of mercy, spare our lives!"

All this Don Felipe said in great earnest though in very bad Spanish, and to his surprise and increasing terror, the jar on the tripod answered not a word.

Parkin, whose mental delusion was now complete, saw nothing but a glittering poniard in the air, uplifted only to be sheathed in his body. In the agony of his soul, he laid hold of the skirt of the poncho, and giving it a violent pull, the hat dropped off, the jar lost its balance, and down it came splash upon our suppliant friend. Luckily, he was protected by his uplifted hands, which turned the jar aside, but not before it had bathed Parkin's body, in a portion of the water it contained. Never doubting that he was bathed in his own blood, he called out (in English) "Help! help! I am murdered," and then sank senseless on the floor.

My brother who, like myself, had from the first believed that Don Pedro's alarm was groundless, was riveted to the spot where he stood when he saw the commencement of Parkin's adventure with the jar, and with the utmost difficulty he refrained from giving way to his mirth. When the jar suddenly came down, however, he ran up to Parkin, fearing he might be hurt, and raised him on

to my bed, at the foot of which had stood the jar, which now lay shivered to pieces on the ground.

As soon as I could hurry on my trousers, dressing-gown, and slippers, I ran out to Don Pedro, who was in the sala with Vangture, the cook, and two or three of his slaves about him. They were all, more or less, in a state of nudity, and, with Don Pedro at their head, they formed a truly comic group. Bating the expression of fear unequivocally displayed in my friend's features, which Don Quixote's undaunted courage on no occasion allowed his to exhibit, never did I see a more striking portraiture of La Mancha's Knight of the Rueful Countenance. His scanty night-shirt, his Barcelona silk night-cap, his long lank legs, his lantern jaws, and the candle in his hand, were exactly such as you find described by Cervantes, with a pen which I cannot wield, when his hero attacks the leathern bottles of wine at the venta, or inn.

Ventura and the slaves, in particular the cook, were dreadfully alarmed;—for I must assure you that the cry of “The Indians!” when they are really approaching, is anything but a joke in South America: so while Don Pedro uttered his excla-

mations and lamentations, they crouched behind him, seeming to expect every moment that the doors would be burst open, and that one and all would be tomahawked by the indomitable Guaycurùs.

I considered that if they had come over, the hubbub of the village would have increased instead of diminishing; and although I had certainly heard the drum beating to arms, and confused voices without, yet, finding no general affray consequent upon these symptoms of alarm, my conviction that all was safe tended greatly to increase my courage. I reasoned, therefore, boldly with Don Pedro, and being now joined by my brother, we both offered, much to the alarm of the frightened Frenchman, to go out and reconnoitre.

“Ah, mes amis!” said he, “quelle chose! quelle chose! I am full of dee feer of les Indió’s. You do see quils sont des Barbares! they are please wid dee blode of de Cretiens, and wid dee gold of dee personnes de distinction! Ah, Seigneur! dat we are dans le grand danger!”

In the mean time, however, one of my brother’s men-at-arms, who was himself an Indian, and a faithful servant, having, like the rest, been roused from his sleep, and having heard what was going

forward, went silently off to see if Don Pedro's fears were well grounded or not. He cautiously approached the quartel, or guard-house, where he saw a number of horses, and heard many voices mingling together. Drawing closer, he ascertained that they were not Indians, and ultimately found that Governor Mendez having despatched one company of horse to replace another at the Guardia de la Esquina, some fifty miles below Goya, the poor fellows, finding themselves benighted, as they passed our port, and knowing they would there have good cheer and repose, turned in for the night. Their appearance being unexpected, the sentinel gave the alarm of "Indios:" the drummer beat to arms, and, frightened out of his wits, ran over to the comandante's house, drumming all the way. The comandante, equally alarmed with his drummer, ordered him to go round and beat up the inhabitants; but ere he had proceeded fifty yards farther, he was happily overtaken by an officer from the guard, who stopped the drumming, and caused the alarm, which was beginning to be general, to cease.

Such was the account which the Indian guide brought back, as my brother and myself prepared

to sally forth. When he had finished, and when we began to look more quietly around us, we for the first time missed the redoubtable George Washington Tuckerman from our circle. And where had he been during all the hubbub? If the truth must be told,—he had absconded. On a former journey he had nearly fallen into the hands of the Indians, and the recollection of his narrow escape acted on his nerves so forcibly on the present occasion, that when Parkin was adjuring the water-jar, Tuckerman was huddling on his clothes. He then contrived to throw open the window of his bedroom, buckled his doubloons about him, and fled in the dark by the back of the house. He lay concealed among the bushes for a length of time in breathless fear of the Indians coming upon him; but after an hour's cold perspiration in his hiding-place, and hearing no noise; seeing no flames ascend from the burning cottages; hearing no appalling shrieks of despairing mothers break upon his ear; he gradually crept again to Don Pedro's house, heard laughing and joking, and at last increased our merriment by standing in the midst of us after his hasty and mysterious flight.

Tuckerman, having thus reappeared, and, with

sentimental serenity, and a smile at the "jocund" humour of his respected English friends, having submitted to the laugh which had been raised; Parkin being now restored to himself, and having also goodnaturedly stood the battery of our mirth, provoked by his mental aberrations; Don Pedro having expressed, in every variety of apologetic eloquence, the "grand douleur" which his mistake, by calling us all up, and frightening some of us out of our wits, had caused him;—every one, sleepy and worn out, just as the day began to peep, betook himself to rest.

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Your's, &c.,

W. P. R.

LETTER XVII.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Journey from Goya to Corrientes—Description of a Post-House—
and of a Night Scene there—The Guitarrero—The Bedroom—
The Expulsion—The Yankee and John Bull—Preparations for a
winding up.

London, 1842.

I REMAINED at Goya two days, looking into accounts, reviewing, with almost Don Pedro's gusto, the piles of hides we had collected there, receiving visits from estancieros with whom we had contracts, paying away Spanish doubloons as if they had been copper pence; and above all, at once cheered and disturbed by the creaking wheels of whole troops of waggons pouring in upon us, laden for ourselves.

I realized to myself, in another way, the joy I fancied a general must experience, at head quarters, as every hour, brought him accounts, from the commissariat department, of the arrival of fresh supplies for his troops.

At length, that I might not exhaust the treasury by the continued drain upon it of this one depôt of

Goya, and knowing that I had plenty of claimants at Corrientes, I took once more to horse for that city. In consideration for George Washington Tuckerman, Esq., and for Philip Parkin, Esq., (both still to be my travelling companions,) I consented to take two days to the journey instead of one. On arrival at the half-way post-house, where we were to stop for the night, we found, in consequence of a note sent from Goya on the previous day, everything prepared for our reception.

The inmates of the hut consisted of a widow, plump, though in the wane of life, of her four daughters, (rather good looking for a mixed breed,) of two sons, several peons, half a dozen large dogs, and ducks and hens, innumerable, hatching eggs in several parts of the hut. The rancho consisted of two apartments, one a large general receiving and sleeping room, with space for half a-dozen hammocks. The other was a mere confined hole of mud, without aperture for either light or air, except through the large saloon. Around the walls of this latter mud apartment, were hung calabashes and horse gear; while earthen pots and pans, a copper *mâté* pot, two or three spits, a stone for sharpening gauchos' knives, and half a-dozen bullocks' skulls, were ranged around

the blazing wood fire, upon which were falling the drippings of the savoury asados destined for supper. On the right stood an olla, or large pot, in which a usual dish of the country, called puchero, and consisting of beef, pumpkin, and French beans, was in process of cookery, while a sort of Maritorness was skimming off the superfluities with a large shell, and throwing them all around her on the floor, and on the legs of any one that did not keep well out of the way. Round went the mâté, and round the paper segars. The guitarrista seized his guitar, and accompanied himself to a native triste. The dogs were stretched out behind the skulls, occupied by the other inmates of the house, and now, too, by ourselves. They lay in sleepy indifference as to the forthcoming meal; for having been satiated with raw beef at the corrál, they cared little about having part of the same animal roasted.

George Washington Tuckerman was struck with the rude barbarity of the scene; Don Felipe, less mercurial or less observing, consoled himself with the mulberry contained in his pocket-pistol. He regaled his nostrils with the high flavoured perfume of the asado, and stimulating himself to increasing appetite by eating a few olives, and working his

imagination into a lively sense of the savoury substantiality of a tender roast, especially to a hungry traveller. Many a furtive glance he stole at one of the landlady's brunettes. He uttered some uncouth syllables to her in Spanish, and made some awkward attempts at gallantry; but instead of opening up a corner in his fair one's heart, he only elicited laughter from all present. Being a good-natured man, he laughed loudest himself at the jokes which he did not half understand; and when subsequently the guitarrista took him off to admiration in his mode of making love, Don Felipe was the most pleased man in the company. The guitarreros of South America, like the Italian buffos of the lower class, have all a facility greater or less, of acting the improvisatore. They have also a good deal of wit, and a perception of character, the more clear in proportion to the elements of contrast to their own of which it may chance to be compounded. Never, in this respect, did so good a subject present himself as Don Felipe to a guitarrero. Ours began to scan and draw, in his mind's eye, from the moment of his alighting, rather saddle-sick, from his horse, the character of old Q.. Having grasped, as he conceived, the whole of my friend's salient

traits, and having witnessed his failure in the attempt to attract his Dulcinea, the guitarrero broke forth in words, music, and gesticulation, showing himself to be an admirable mimic.

Even George Washington, little as he understood of Spanish verse, rubbed his hands, and forgetting the usual dignity and romance of his character, gave way to unqualified emotions of hilarity, and kissed his fingers, and outstretched his arm, and drew his hand back to his mouth, and pronounced the whole thing "exquisite."

But supper was ready. Some with shells paid their devoirs to the puchero ; but most, with gleaming knives, cut into the asado. No one had a plate ; each held his beef between his fingers, and cutting off the morsel most to his choice, forthwith conveyed it to his mouth. The gauchos, and the ladies, drank nothing but water.

The English and American travellers were less abstemious, but too polite not to offer a portion of their liquids to the people of the house. They partook of them, however, but sparingly.

At length preparations were made to go to bed, or rather to hammocks, and hides on the floor. As an old friend of the old lady, and as one who had

often passed that way, I was admitted to a hammock in the saloon, surrounded by the family group. Not so Don Korkey, nor Don Felipe. There was not room for the two additional hammocks they must have occupied, and there was no inclination to admit more strangers into a place in which so many females were to be laid asleep. On the ground there was no room; for the Gauchos and dogs, and a huge pile of embers, occupied that space; so that with some reluctance on the part of Don Felipe, and very badly disguised chagrin on that of George Washington, both were thrust for the night into the mud cell, and left there to accommodate themselves as they best might. It was too cold to sleep without, and too melting to sleep within the cabin; but Don Korkey and Don Felipe having consulted together, and come to the conclusion that it was better to perspire than to freeze, were "locked up" for the night, agreeing, for once in their lives, in the same view of the case;—Don Felipe, that it was abominable—Don Korkey, that it was barbarous. Both gentlemen, especially the former, had made so many appeals in the course of the evening, to the contents of the polished cow-horns, redolent of Hollands and of Cognac, that

about midnight they rose by mutual consent, in search of the more refreshing beverage—water, with which to quench their burning thirst; “to cool their coppers,” as Don Felipe said. But the water-jar was not to be found; and they began, in their impatience, to knock at the little door, which separated the sala from the mud saloon, and to bellow at the pitch of their parched throats, “agua, agua,” (water, water.) The old lady and her daughters were alarmed. The dogs barked, the ducks went quack, quack, the hens cackled, and the Gauchos rose up, convinced that something wrong was intended. My remonstrances were in vain; grasping at once the goodnatured Don Felipe and the choleric American by the napes of their necks, they thrust them out of doors, and giving them a couple of hides on which to sleep, a jar of water, and a light for their segars, would by no means hear of any farther indulgence. Don Felipe got me, with some difficulty, to obtain for him the use of his cow-horn, as the old lady alleged he would certainly get tipsy, and make a fresh disturbance.

It was in vain that Don Korkey pleaded asthma, and probable death, from exposure, and that Don Felipe avowed he could not outlive the night. Out

they were marched, to pass, in unenviable solitude, a night of fretfulness and fear.

Don Korkey, ever afraid of tigers, would not sleep, but walked sentinel at the door, and sipped with persevering application his share of the contents of Don Felipe's brandy flask. This being emptied, the Englishman was left in a profound doze, ignorant of all things, and indifferent to all; while the Yankee, though well stimulated by his quantum, grew only the more and more testy, unreasonable, and impatient.

Dire and many were the imprecations he called down upon the nocturnal chime which was pealing within. How should this be? John Bull was asleep; the citizen of Washington in a fume. John Bull, even in his fits of intoxication, is a practical philosopher; the Yankee, even in his sober moments, a mercurial spirit. The Englishman, at most, loves a state of fermentation; the American delights in one of effervescence. Here we are content with matter of fact; in America they live in a world of fiction. John Bull is satisfied if he knock you down; a Yankee is not pleased unless he blow out your brains. And if it be true that "*in vinum veritas*," then these observations,

if true at all, are as much to be relied on with reference to Don Felipe and Don Korkey in their cups, as to their respective nations when intoxicated with the spirit of "*bella, horrida bella.*"

As the longest night has an end, so had this. Anxious about my friends, I sallied out at break of day, and found the "*par nobile fratrum*" stretched on their hides, their whiskers sprinkled with dew, and their bodies covered with a poncho.

A night does wonders in the way of composing agitated spirits; and all parties being now tolerably placable, we had breakfast as usual. I bade a hearty adieu to the hostess and her household; but Don Korkey, and even Don Felipe, though perhaps the aggressors, innocent ones indeed, refused to go so far. Not so the hostess; she wished them *buen viage* (a good journey), and shily recommended them in future to put a jar of water each by the side of his hammock. In the evening we alighted at my residence in Corrientes, where my two travelling companions, as a matter of course, took up their abode. Being joined by Mr. Postlethwaite, we did the honours of reception so effectually, as not only to make up for past grievances, but to convert the post-house subject

into a laughing accompaniment to our supper. Don Korkey was rather tender at first, but forgot himself at last, and lent himself as willingly as Don Felipe to be one of the two butts (always in a good-natured way, however) of the evening.

The Washingtonian continued for a few days to be rather nettled by the recollection of his rough treatment at the post-house hut; and he told the story among his friends with great emphasis and vituperation; whereas Don Felipe, all forgetful of the discomfort of his plight,—all unconscious of any loss of dignity, and not having many jokes of his own, kept and told this as a standard one. With more adroitness than usual, he drew George Washington as the splenetic watchman, and kept him prominently in view throughout the piece.

During the six or seven months which followed my return to Corrientes, I was fully engaged in directing, managing, and bringing to a focus concerns which, in little more than twelve months, had so grown upon our hands, as to bring us into contact and dealings with, more or less, every respectable person in the province.

To hear us talk so much of hides, and skins, and wool, and horsehair, and carts, and bullocks, and

drivers, and agents, and habilitados, and stores, and goods, and dollars, and doubloons, you may run off with the idea that we were little better than hucksters on a large scale. Not so. Even the term huckster, or retail dealer, implies always, in Corrientes, something respectable; that of comerciante (merchant), something aristocratic; but that of comerciante grueso or poderoso (wealthy or extensive merchant), something altogether magnificent. Thus Abadia in Lima, the Alzagas and Sarrateas in Buenos Ayres, were much greater and more influential men than the landed proprietors of those places.

Thus, too, comparing small things with great, were we more the Don Magnificos in Corrientes than the Governor; while all the country gentlemen for a hundred leagues round were mere hucksters *under us*. Often have I seen a landed proprietor, whose descendant of some future generation is sure to be a duke, drive off himself, with six or eight mules, laden with our merchandize, to his estate. There he retailed out articles of clothing to his peons and neighbours; and brought back, under his own superintendence, the waggon-loads of hides which he had to give in return. Thus the commercial

interest, in a thinly-peopled country, and therefore generally nomadic, is always a more influential interest than the landed one. It is only after commerce, by gathering men into societies for the supply of their mutual wants, has increased population, and furnished to the owners of land tenants to rent, and labourers to cultivate the soil, that the country gentleman, possessed of real property continually increasing in value, supersedes the rank, wealth, and importance of the merchant ; whose fortune is ever liable to be stranded upon the shoals of speculation, or lost in the under-currents of chance, time, and tide.

In the case of the Corrientes landed gentleman, we see that he united in his own person the dignified status of lord of the manor with the ignoble occupation (so deemed to all intents and purposes in this country) of huckster : but it was by this combination of callings that the country first began to assume an air of substantial prosperity ; that the comfort of its inhabitants was increased ; that a spirit of industry and enterprize was diffused ; and that the landed proprietor himself was the first to feel the substantiality of his wealth, and to be taught the convertibility into gold of his

hitherto unheeded leagues of land and badly managed thousands of cattle.

Every month, every week was now bringing us nearer to a "wind-up" of our affairs : for we had determined to leave, as soon as possible, a country which, after all, was somewhat removed from civilization ; in which the institutions were fluctuating, and protection and security rather owing to individual tact than to established principle.

I kept, therefore, dispatching the property I had collected at Corrientes ; my brother, at Goya, filling up any vacant space in the vessels I sent down, or chartering others for his own use. At length I only awaited the arrival of two brigantines from Buenos Ayres (one, called the San José, being our own) to bid adieu to Corrientes.

Your's, &c.

J. P. R.

LETTER XVIII.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Departure from Don Pedro's mansion—He proves something like a Rogue—Shuffles and prevaricates, but assumes an air of Honesty.

London, 1842.

IF I left Don Pedro Quesnèy's large, airy, and comfortable residence for my own confined little cottage with regret, it was solely on his account. His reluctance that I should take up a separate abode, he manifested in many really touching little ways. It was painful to him to be left once more alone. I was the first person with whom he had held unreserved intercourse in that part of the world, and in whom he could implicitly confide. I had fallen easily into his peculiarities,—had never appeared to notice his deficiencies,—had helped him in some of his little difficulties; had given him, by my residence in his house, an assurance of personal security which he had never before felt; and I had helped him to pass away many evenings which, without resources in himself, would

otherwise have hung heavily, perhaps painfully, on his hands. All these little things, nothing in themselves when taken separately, but something in their aggregate value, had rendered me a favourite with Don Pedro ; and a little business matter arose, which, though at first threatening an interruption to his kindly feelings, I think in the end gained me some addition of his goodwill. The incident was agreeable to me ; for while I was enabled to serve a worthy friend, I induced Don Pedro to perform an act of honesty, on a large scale, which I looked upon as some atonement for previous mercantile misdeeds, and which certainly eased his mind of one of the heaviest burthens which lay upon it. The matter to which I allude was this.

Quesnèy's chief supporter, when he left Buenos Ayres, was a Mr. Stroud,* a highly respectable Englishman, and very well known to my brother and myself. I have also said that Stroud could never get his property out of Quesnèy's hands,—he could not even get accounts from him.

On learning, through our friend in Buenos Ayres,

* His name became well known afterwards in Buenos Ayres by his building of a large windmill (the first ever seen in the country), and which went for many years by the name of " Stroud's Mill."

Mr. Fair, that I was about to settle for a time in Goya, Mr. Stroud requested me to use my good offices in procuring some sort of settlement,—any I could bring about or thought advisable,—of his claims on Don Pedro. In reply, I requested Mr. Stroud to send me a power of attorney to act for him, and this was forthwith done.

I then opened up the business to Don Pedro in the most friendly manner. Great was his fever, great his consternation, and great also his *anger* at first, when he found he had the accredited agent of Mr. Stroud under his own roof; but he quickly perceived, as I foresaw he would, that the power, since it was in Goya, was better in my hands than in those of any other individual in the port. He knew his reputation, as far as his transactions with Stroud went, was safe in my keeping, and he was satisfied I would not deal harshly with him.

He began by denying absolutely and *in toto* that he owed a farthing to Mr. Stroud.—“ I do owe heem noting—noting at all; rien du tout,” he would say, “ dee Gauch ave take all,—all dee propertee of Monsieur Strou—more, more dan all. I do owe heem noting, noting, Don Guillerm.”

And in this strain he went on for several successive evenings.

But dates and figures being stubborn things, I brought matters, by degrees, to such a point as to convince Don Pedro that something he must give for a final release and acquittance from Mr. Stroud. "Eh bien!" said he at last, "what you want, Don Guillerm? Ah mon ami! you hab dee consideration for my great perts—my misère—look you here" (and he pointed to his scars),—"for dee soffering of my bodee."

"Don Pedro," I replied, "I have anxiously looked into the whole matter; and, without forgetting what is in justice due to your old friend Stroud, I am desirous of giving you the benefit" (he seized and squeezed my hand) "of that equitable consideration to which, under all the circumstances of the case, I think you are entitled. I have made up my mind as to my award, standing between two friends and wishing to act impartially towards both. I think Mr. Stroud's claim, strictly speaking, could hardly be satisfied with less than five thousand pesadas* of hides," (Don Pedro started to his feet in horror and amazement,) "but I will give you a

* A pesada is a weight of thirty-five pounds.

discharge for three thousand five hundred pesadas, provided they are of good quality and chosen from the piles by myself.

Don Pedro would not listen for a moment to my proposal, although I knew it to be a most reasonable one. He hurriedly walked up and down the room, — ejaculated, — upbraided, — argued ;—but still most sincerely repudiating any such sacrifice on his part, and wondering how *I*, his friend, could desire him to submit to it.

“ Very well, Don Pedro,” said I, “ there is an easy way of settling the matter, as far as you and I are concerned. I will return the power to Mr. Stroud, and he can employ some one else in the business.”

No, no, Don Pedro would not have me return the power. He desired I should give him time to consider of an offer which he would make, in order to bring the matter to an amicable conclusion.

Next morning, accordingly, as soon as we met, he said, “ Va, Don Guillerm ! I geeve five hondare pesad de cuirs—les bons cuirs ! You do choose dee bess—you pick dee good cuirs. Va ! c’est bon, Don Guillerm !”

But I could not think it at all well that honest

Mr. Stroud should only receive hundreds for thousands, and that, after being for years out of his money. So I stood fixed at my first proposition. Don Pedro, on the contrary, tried again and again a new one,—a thousand,—fifteen hundred,—two thousand: each time he was more and more earnest that I should yield: but I had named my minimum; and in the end, my eccentric but prudent host agreed, as I thought he would, to the three thousand five hundred pesadas.

The arrangement was, happily, an advantageous one for both parties: the hides had cost Don Pedro little,—they were valuable in Buenos Ayres. Mr. Stroud was astonished at his good fortune when he found a remittance of hides in his hands, which returned him principal and interest for what he had long considered a bad debt; and Quesnèy, some time after the transaction was concluded, confessed to me that I had taken a load off his mind which was well worth the hides he had given, and for which he should ever feel grateful to me. So good a thing is it, in the end, to be HONEST.

This knotty point settled, Don Pedro and I had no farther difference on business, nor on any other

matters. We strove with each other in doing mutual little kindnesses, as opportunity offered. I lent him money when he wanted it, and when I required a thousand hides to fill up a vessel, in order to load it quickly, he would sell them to me,—and so he gradually resumed his business, which he had not ventured to do before I arrived at the port. With kindly feelings, therefore, on both sides, I took leave of my hospitable host, and moved to my own hut, of which I shall give you some slight account in my next letter.

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER XIX.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

My Cottage in Goya—Carpets there—Operations—Wild Cattle—
Slaughter of wild Horses—A Tiger and a Bull—Collecting of
Hides.

London, 1842.

THE cottage to which I moved was placed on a little rising ground of the undulating border of the river, and not a hundred paces from the bank, which rose a few feet perpendicularly from the water, and formed a quay, at which the vessels loaded and unloaded. My dwelling consisted of two apartments on the ground,—a sitting room and bed room, with a little detached out-house which served as my kitchen and pantry. I don't think the whole building cost twenty pounds in its erection; and yet principal and interest in many cases stand on so proximate a footing in South America, that I paid 12*l.* per annum of rent. The owner would not *sell* me his cottage, and he was right; I received it from him a desolate little barn,—the wind whistling through holes and crevices in the

walls ; rats burrowing in the floors ; the unplastered mud falling to pieces,—windows unglazed,—doors without bolt or bar ; in short, a place that could only be coveted by the paupers of such a poor-house as that of Sevenoaks, which I remember some time ago, on its being laid open to view by the “Times,” appalled and astonished the comfortable part of the community.

But I got half a dozen people to work, and in a few days I made the wretched old hovel disappear, and a spruce little cottage start up in its stead. The walls were made good, new plastered and whitewashed outside and in : the thatch was entirely renewed ; the windows glazed, the doors mended, and both painted green. A paling of the same colour was run round my abode ; a little lawn appeared in front ; and the cottage, with these simple adjuncts, though very lowly, assumed a neat and comfortable appearance.

My principal furniture I got from Corrientes, and my English yellow cane sofa and chairs, brought from our establishment at the former place, commanded great admiration. My tables were mahogany ; my books were slung in little moveable shelves ; my candlesticks were Sheffield

plated ; and a pair of cut decanters, with some smart wine glasses, on my little sideboard, also attracted the attention of the Goyeros.

But what *I* prided myself on was my carpet. It was composed of magnificent tiger skins collected in the province, and it entirely covered my “sala,” which was of a good size. I question if our royal lady, Queen Victoria, has now in Buckingham-palace so splendid a carpet as was mine in Goya. The skins, some of them enormously large, and all of them beautifully spotted, —(what is in South America called the tiger is in reality the ounce,)—were sewn together with the utmost nicety and precision, and the effect produced was quite grand.

It will scarcely be believed, however, that this was the only part of my ménage which was considered by my neighbours of Goya to be a decided failure. “So common ! so *very* inferior to the rest of the furniture !”

An estanciero came in one forenoon to receive some fifteen hundred or two thousand dollars for hides, and I invited him to be seated. He looked around with great approbation. “A fine

room," at length, said he; "beautiful furniture, Señor Don Guillermo, you have got here. I never saw anything better. But," and here he looked with profound contempt at my superb carpet,—“but, sir, when you have gone to *such* an expense in fitting up your room, why did you not finish the whole by adding an English carpet to it, instead of using a parcel of common tiger skins rudely patched together?” I was about to remonstrate; but the estanciero added, with evident disdain of my ill-timed frugality, “Tut! Tut! spend fifty dollars more, since you have spent so much, and don’t use what even *I* would be ashamed to lay down in my house.”

Thus we are taught that what is cheap, abundant, easily acquired, is vulgar, low, despicable, whatever judgment mankind at large may have pronounced on its outward beauty; while that which is rare, seldom seen, difficult to be had, though it be but a chair costing a few shillings, is the genteel thing, the envied piece of elegance of the community at large. Fashion is one thing in London, and altogether a different affair in Goya.

Near to my cottage, and still closer to the river,

stood our galpones, or hide warehouses; and close to them was the *quartèl*,—the guard-house, a large barn, occupied by about fifty men, the military force of the comandante of Goya. My barn, or quartèl, had often a greater number collected in and around it; and if Comandante Brest was the military, I was certainly the mercantile chief of Goya.

Mine, after all, was the most important command of the two; for while Brest's soldiers lounged away the day in absolute idleness, my lieutenants, capataces, peons, carters, sailors, and others, were from sunrise to sunset in a constant, busy, and animated train of action.

You may be able to form some idea of what our daily operations were, when I say that, during the nine months I stayed at Goya, from January to October, we shipped off from that port fifty thousand ox hides, one hundred thousand horse hides, and bales of wool and hair I know not how many. To collect all this produce; to barter here; to contract there; to bring it from everywhere; to have the hides weighed and piled up in the galpones on receiving them; to see that they were cleaned, beaten, put in order, examined

classed and sorted on the quay; then to ship them; to keep the requisite number of men constantly together; and, finally, to attend to our tropas of carts, and keep them moving, (to say nothing of the daily levees held at my cottage,)—all formed an animated scene of activity and bustle.

It may not be uninteresting rapidly to trace here the progress of the great article of production—hides, from the time of their being on the animals' backs to that of their being finally deposited in the ship's hold.

Cattle, on the great estates of the River Plate provinces, consists generally of two distinct classes: one called *Ganado de rodeo*, or *herded* cattle; the other, *Ganado alzado*, or *wild* cattle. Where the territory consists of an open plain, and where the proprietor, with his servants, is enabled to superintend and watch his growing herds, there are few or no wild cattle; but where the estates are very large and well-wooded, even the best superintendence will not prevent cattle from separating from the herds, getting into the montes or woods, and there increasing in a wild state. If, added to this local facility, the herds are not well and constantly watched, the number of wild cattle gets

proportionally greater. In the pampas or plains of Buenos Ayres there is scarcely such a thing now as ganado alzado; and regular herding and care have greatly diminished them even in the wooded territory of the Banda Oriental and Entre Rios.

But in these latter extensive and fertile provinces, the lawless sway of Artigas brought insecurity to person and property. Estancias were deserted, or only partially attended to; herds were scattered by soldiers, instead of being gathered together by herdsmen; and, by degrees, almost all the cattle existing in both countries,—the Banda Oriental and Entre Rios, extending in length to six or seven hundred miles, and a breadth in proportion,—became alzado or wild.

In Corrientes, accordingly, three-fourths of the hides which we purchased were those of ganado alzado, and most of the animals from which they were taken were slaughtered during our residence in the province.

The mode, and a barbarous one it is, of killing tame cattle in South America by means of horsemen and lasos, must be well known to all our

readers. The ganado alzado were killed quite in a different manner.

For shelter during the night they invariably took to the woods; and the "matanza," or slaughter, of them took place there during the summer months, and by moonlight. When the night was clear,—and it was seldom otherwise,—a number of men, varying according to the quantity of cattle collected, or hides wanted, put on a sort of front armour of hide, so as to enable them to scramble in among the thorny trees without lacerating their bodies. The woods consist almost exclusively of mimosas, including many varieties of the thorny acacia. When the men got in among the trees where the cattle were reposing, they crawled on their knees and hands among the sleeping tenants of the woods; and armed with sharp knives, they stuck them in the throats, left them to bleed to death, and returned in the morning to flay them. These men carried, also, a kind of hide shield, to defend them in the event of an attack from any of the roused bulls, should they suddenly turn round upon them.

There was a picturesque barbarity in the opera-

tion ; but it was comparatively easy work to that of slaughtering the wild horses,—the noble and unrestrained, but nevertheless doomed tenants of their native forests. At the time of our sojourn in Corrientes, these wild horses and mares had so overrun the country, that it was not uncommon to find particular herds of them of five to ten thousand in number.

From thirty to fifty, or even more men, were employed in any particular slaughter of these animals ; and the mode they adopted was this :—they formed, on the edge of some extensive wood or forest, an immense corràl, or circular enclosure, made of very strong wooden stakes, supported and bound together by hide ropes, which all round lashed horizontal staves, in the form of a hoop to the upright palisades. It was capable of holding from five to ten thousand horses,—I believe, in some instances, even more. A very large aperture, or gate, led into it, and on the side opposite to the entrance another smaller corràl was attached to and opened into the large one.

These preparations made, the men, all mounted on very strong and powerful horses, went into the adjoining wood, and forming a semicircle, they

drove before them some large flock of horses which, after a general survey of the wood, they had fixed upon. With shouts and cries they kept closing in upon the flock, driving them in a dense phalanx, though nearly in a frantic state, to the edge of the forest. Here the wild and hunted animals rushed into the intervening plain, and the peons again dexterously forming a semicircular guard, urged their prisoners on at the height of their speed, directing them to the opening of the corràl. Many would escape and regain the woods, but the great proportion was pressed into the enclosure ; and the operation was repeated till the large corràl was filled. Then a given number was packed into the small adjoining penn, in which they were brought to the ground by the bolas of the Gauchos, slaughtered while lying powerless, dragged out at a gateway, and skinned on the surrounding grounds.

I have been assured by parties whose testimony was indubitable, for they were the leaders of these *Corridas de yeguas Chùcaras*, or wild mare hunts, that in driving these herds to the corràl, it would happen that a tiger, distracted and alarmed with the coming cries of the men, and rush and noise of the troop, would start from its lair, and in an attempt to

escape, by crossing the plain, would get entangled with the flock; when such was the impetus with which the mass was hurried on, that the tiger, after a desperate plunge among the frantic horses, would in a few seconds get trodden to death.

Another native of the forests, I may observe,—the tiger himself,—was regularly hunted for his skin. There were a few daring spirits who followed the terrific, but exciting trade, of tiger hunters. They seldom used fire-arms, and when they did, they always endeavoured to shoot the animal in the head or neck, so as not to hurt the centre of the skin. But they went generally into the forests with well-trained dogs, trusting to them and to long double-edged and finely pointed knives which they carried with them. The hunter used a hide shield for defence; and when, goaded by the dogs, the tiger made its spring at his assailant, he caught it with the knife in its throat. A steady hand, a stout heart, and an eagle eye, were wanted for the operation; but even these did not always save the hunter from laceration,—in some instances from death. Sometimes the tiger turned upon the dogs, and the huntsman, ever on the alert, flew with his knife to their aid. The hunted prey would, on other occa

sions, climb up a tree, and there glare upon those who were, as instinct taught him, intent upon his life. Surrounding him below, they in various ways endeavoured to get him within their reach, in the most advantageous way for themselves. Sometimes, in the ardour of pursuit, the huntsman would himself climb the tree, and on the very boughs enter into the death struggle with his fearful enemy,—both not unfrequently coming together to the ground, where the powerful dogs would immediately grapple with the tiger.

This beast of prey in the South American woods does not attack the bull, which he knows to be too heavy and too nearly a match for him. He picks out where he can, as his favourite prey, young colts and heifers, and attacks them as they fly. He always waits till they have turned from him, and then makes his spring generally on their backs,—breaks their necks by pressing them against the shoulder with his powerful paw, and then drags them into the wood, to eat them in security and at his leisure.

I was told, however, during my stay in Goya, of a tiger and a bull having been found in an extraordinary position: they were both dead, and indeed

partially decayed. The bull appeared to have been much torn, but the tiger was firmly fixed on the immense horns of the bull,—the latter having wanted strength, after the struggle, to extricate himself from the enemy he had pierced to death.

Returning to the hides. After the horned cattle and horses are slaughtered and flaid, in the way I have mentioned, their hides are staked on the ground and there kept in the sun till they are quite dry. They are then conveyed, in a rough and dirty state, to an estancia, or the port, as I have described, in one of Don Manuel's journeys. Landed at the barraca, or hide warehouse, they are there cleaned outside and in, and beaten with staves to free them of the *polilla*, an insect which is the great and destructive enemy of skins and hides of every kind. They are then placed in the barraca in large piles, built up to the very roof, a process which flattens and smoothes them; and being then periodically taken from the piles, beaten and replaced, a greater or less number of times, according to the length of their detention in the barraca, they are finally shipped under every care that the *polilla* go not on board with them. As this insect disappears

with the cold of winter, the principal shipments of hides are made during that season.

The beating of the hides with staves is quite an art, although apparently the most simple operation in the world. It is done by two men, who take hold of the opposite ends of the hides, which have been doubled like a sheet of paper, and jerking the two leaves partially open to allow the polilla to drop on the ground, they beat both sides simultaneously. Exact time is kept by good beaters, and they go through the operation with incredible celerity. Each pair of them will keep six or eight men actively employed in bringing out the hides from the piles and taking them in again, and now and then, when the beaters run the carriers out, or when they have finished off some large pile, they will tattoo a tune on the last hide, by way of a jeer or a triumph, in the fashion of a merry peal of village church bells. I must not omit to mention, also, that great dexterity, as well as strength, is displayed by the peons in pitching up the hides to the rising pile which is built in the barraca, where they are received or caught, and symmetrically arranged by two pile makers standing on the solid heap. Fun

and joke, and hilarity, preside over the whole operations of a barraca ; and at evening the fires and the suppers, such as those I have detailed in speaking of a tropa of carts, wind up the labours of the day.

It may amuse some of our business and politico-economical readers to trace the *value* of hides from the wilds of South America to the tanpits of Liverpool, and back again from the curriers and boot and shoemakers to the original owners of the material.

When the River Plate provinces formed a viceroyalty of Spain, the merest elementary principles of traffic were not understood in the interior parts and provinces far removed from the capital. The *estancieros* then did not even attach a separate value to their *land* and their *stock*. Old Candiotti, the famous *estanciero*, of whom we have spoken in Letters on Paraguay, used to buy, as we have seen, all his estates simply by the number of cattle upon them, and these valued at a very low rate. Thus he would purchase an *estancia*, with forty thousand head of cattle on it, at half a dollar or two shillings a-head, and the estate itself, consisting of many square miles,—nay, leagues of the finest pasture and arable land in the world,—went into the bargain !

This simple grandeur of contract was gradually

abandoned, and the *estanciero* sold so many head of cattle, to be slaughtered on his estate, at so much, but “having and holding” his grounds for himself. The price, when we were in Corrientes, was still in this way about four rials for *ganado alzado*, or wild cattle,—that is, the purchaser had the beef (useless), horns, hide, and tallow, for two shillings.

The dried *hide* became more valuable than the animal itself, for there was to add to the original cost all the expense of slaughter, curing the hide, carting, &c. For a great proportion of ours in Corrientes and Goya, we paid one dollar to ten rials the *pesada*, a weight of thirty-five pounds, equal to about three halfpence per pound. Three months afterwards they were sold in Buenos Ayres at about five pence halfpenny per pound; and perhaps six months after that they were sold in Liverpool and London at from nine pence to ten pence per pound to the tanners. Supposing one hide with another to give twenty shillings, it then produced exactly ten times the amount which the South American country gentleman received for the whole animal on his estate.

No doubt many of the ox hides, or calf and

horse skins thus sold and transported to England, found their way back to Corrientes in the shape of boots and shoes, when the estanciero discovered that, to be entitled to as much of his own original material, now metamorphosed by British manufacture and craft, as would cover his legs, he had to give up a score of good bullocks; or that wanting a smaller portion to protect his feet, he must make over for it some forty or fifty good horses or mares.

I have still in my possession, a contract which I made in Goya with an estanciero for twenty thousand wild horses, to be taken on his estate at the price of a *medio* each; that is to say, three pence for each live horse or mare. The slaughter of them cost three pence a-head more; the staking and cleaning the hides, once more, three pence; and lastly, a like sum for the carting to Goya, making the whole cost one shilling for each skin. Of this contract ten thousand animals were delivered; the skins were packed in bales and sold in Buenos Ayres at six rials or three shillings each, and they sold ultimately in England for seven or eight shillings; that is, the skins sold for about 2,800 to 3,000 per cent. on the first cost of the horse from which the skin was taken. Such is the accumu-

lative value sometimes of the produce which is taken from the hands of the grower in one country before it gets into the hands of the consumer in another.

But although produce was comparatively so very cheap on the estates of the growers, you must not run away with the idea that very prodigious profits arose to us from the purchase: the expenses incurred before we got the hides and other articles to the Buenos Ayres market was at least as much again as the cost. Yet, on the other hand, the great proportion of these expenses, originating and being paid in the province itself, while they increased the cost of the article to us, added to the riches of the country. A very large profit,—arising principally from a great and sudden improvement taking place in the price of hides in Buenos Ayres,—was still left to ourselves; and we had the double gratification of knowing that, while our operations were enriching us, they were spreading prosperity throughout the country which yielded us its willing and abundant harvest.

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER XX.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Practical Philosophy, if not deep—The Courier Leyva.

London, 1842.

IN the intercourse which my brother at Corrientes and I at Goya kept up, there was a mixture of stirring business and recreation of the mind,—I can scarcely venture to class it so high as literary relaxation,—which, to ardent and somewhat imaginative young men, possessed a surpassing charm. But though scarcely to be described, it will be easily appreciated by our younger readers; while by those who, like ourselves, are now “falling into the sear the yellow leaf,” it will best be understood by their recalling to recollection their earlier feelings, when they were still unblunted by the hacknied ways of the world,—while they were yet unsullied by the blurring action of those later vicissitudes, which man, born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, is doomed to suffer in his sojourn through this valley of tears.

At two or three-and-twenty, experience has not

yet stepped in to open our eyes to the real nature of the journey we are then about to undertake. Full of elastic joy and buoyant hopes, every thing presents itself to our view "*couleur de rose*." A garden of bliss rather than a valley of tears opens up its enchantments to our fascinated view; and we are more inclined to fancy that our way is to be strewn with flowers, than to believe we shall be constrained to tread on a thickening texture of thorns. Old age, we feel assured, is querulous, not because it has really ascertained that all is "vanity and vexation of spirit;" but because, by reason of its infirmities, it can no longer enjoy those pleasures and that happiness with which the world, to the plastic mind of youth, abounds.

After all, it is but a sorry occupation, if it be not indeed an invidious task, to restrain the enthusiasm of youth, and to attempt to mar the brightness of the early summer of life, by the unwelcome exhibition of its cold ungenial winter. I have had my own share of the cares and sorrows of this world; but I would no more fret to see the exuberant joys and ardent pursuits of pleasure, which mark the opening career of the young, merely because I knew they would find all things to

be “weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable” in the end, than I would complain of the tender foliage of a tree bursting in spring into a green and vigorous life, because I was aware that autumn would take the sap out of its leaves, and expose it to be stripped of all its summer beauty by the first nippings of approaching winter.

But I digress. With so much to say on business, and *not* on business, my brother and I soon found that the tardy weekly post established between Corrientes and Goya was altogether inadequate to our epistolary demands; and that we must have some medium of communication of our own more suitable to the often urgent and always voluminous nature of our correspondence. We resolved to keep a courier in our pay, and we fixed for the purpose on a man of the name of Leyva,—a grave, sedate, imperturbable fellow: he was never apparently in a hurry, yet the very best of messengers. I scarcely ever saw a smile illumine his face, and yet there was nothing morose nor surly in his disposition. He was a machine which never went wrong,—punctual as a clock, and, like its pendulum, always moving backwards and forwards. If difficulties occurred on the way, they were never

felt by us; for in such case his energies, put into instant requisition, ceased not till he had righted himself, and fallen into his usual routine. We had never to say, even in that uncertain country, "What can have happened to Leyva?" for we knew that once despatched from Corrientes or Goya, he would arrive at his given hour. During nine months he travelled in all weathers; we entrusted him not only with our correspondence, but with gold in large quantities; he travelled alone, the distance, as we have elsewhere noticed, being about 150 miles, and never did we miss a letter, never had we a moment's anxiety about our money. "Leyva, the courier of the English merchants," was known to every body, and he was the most readily served man at the post-houses on the road.

By us the sight of his melancholy and immovable countenance was always hailed with unfeigned delight. He carried his great packets of despatches and his rouleaus of doubloons in his alforjas or saddle bags; and as he tumbled, one after another, the former out on the table, there was always a striking contrast between the pleasure portrayed in the features of his "patrones," and the placid

serenity of his own. "See," he would say, after his alforja was empty, "if it be right, patròn;" and on being assured that all was in order, he would retire to the kitchen, and set about preparing his mâté, dinner or supper, simply nodding to whoever was about, as if he had only been on half an hour's errand. He would quietly, however, satisfy all their inquiries about news, knowing that they looked upon him as the perambulatory gazette of Corrientes and Goya. He appeared to take no interest himself, however, in the matters he related; while, on the other hand, he asked no questions to gratify any curiosity of his own, seeming to take for granted that in his absence all things went on in the same way as when he was present.

Having satisfied his wants, which was easily done, he would return to his patròn, and ask when he was again to be "dispatched"? If it was the same day, the same night, next morning, or the next hour, it was all the same to Leyva: there he was with his sedate countenance, and his saddled horse at the door, punctual to the moment. He would wait till we were ready for him, sometimes for several hours, without ever once showing the

slightest symptom of impatience ; and so he would have waited had we kept him for a day and a night in the same way. When he heard, "Come, then, Leyva, here are your despatches," he would carefully stow them away in his alforjas, and quietly say, "hasta la vuelta, patròn," (farewell till my return, master.) He then mounted his horse, and set off at a gallop which he kept up, except when changing horses or taking a meal, till he arrived at the end of his journey. Whether he travelled by night or by day, in rain or in sunshine, in heat or in cold, was a matter of perfect indifference to the patient Leyva.

On one occasion, and one only, that our courier was coming from Corrientes to Goya, when he arrived, he broke through his laconic routine, and after he had delivered his despatches, told me that he had been detained for two or three hours on the road, from having had a very bad *rodada*, that is from his horse coming down with him. The animal was killed by the fall, having literally broken its neck. I asked Leyva, with much concern, if he had been hurt ; but he looked at me with surprise, and with a momentary flush of feeling, almost amounting to anger. "Hurt !" he repeated, with

an energy, which I had never before witnessed in his manner, "Hurt! no, patròn, how should I have been hurt? *sali parado*, I landed on my feet,"—and so in a moment I recollected I had expressed a doubt of his horsemanship, which no true Gaucho can hear without being affronted. These men, where they are true *ginètes*, or horsemen, perhaps more properly translated *rough riders*, are so thoroughly dexterous in the management of their horse, that come down as they may, at full speed, and however suddenly and violently, the *ginète*, or jockey, with the quickness of thought, throws his reins over the horse's head, and springs from the saddle to the ground, on his feet. To do otherwise, is an indelible disgrace; and if seen to fall by any friends or companions, or even strangers, (supposing them to be *ginètes*,) the luckless horseman is jeered, and laughed at. "*Vea al ginète! Vea al ginète!*" "See what a horseman!" they cry, and then clapping their mouths with their hands, they hoot him in derision, and only laugh at him the more, the heavier the blow he appears to have received. Recollecting all this, I smoothed Leyva's ruffled feathers as I best could, and asked him how he had managed with his dead horse? "I unsad-

dled him," said he, resuming once more his quiet manner, "and taking my saddle and bridle on my back, I walked to the post-house, which was about four leagues off."*

Notwithstanding the general quietude of Leyva, there *were* occasions when his dark eye would brighten up, and his air betoken that he had some matter of importance on hand. This was, whenever we announced to him that on his succeeding journey, my brother or myself would accompany him to or from Corrientes. On such occasions he would, on his return journey, previously to the one he was to make with us, deviate from his post route, and bespeak for us, at the different estancias, the best horses to be ready the following day, when, as the good people were informed, "the patròn" would pay them a visit. As we went along, at full speed, with our courier, all bespoke the care with which he had prepared for our journey: horses, postilions, breakfast, dinner, all were in readiness for us at the proper places, and Leyva himself was never a moment from our side.

For all his work as courier, and for all responsibility as travelling treasurer, Leyva had forty

* Twelve miles.

dollars a month, his expences, which were invariably moderate, being paid by us. How in earth he contrived to spend his own five shillings a-day, we never could find out. But spend them he did, for on our leaving Corrientes, all his riches consisted of a bonus which we then allowed him, and which no doubt, in the same mysterious way as his wages, soon disappeared.

I think no man in the province of Corrientes, commanded so great a share of our kindly feelings as this same Leyva. There is a wonderful tendency in our nature to love the immediate agent of our pleasures, however little connexion there may be between the one and the other. And it matters not whether the agent be animate or inanimate. A stile, a tree, a rivulet, are often so identified in our minds with the pleasures of which they form the scene, that to visit them and look upon them, forms part and parcel of the pleasure itself; or in our recollection they are so indelibly connected with it, as to become the favourite haunts which we love in after times to revisit. Leyva was, perhaps, little better than the inanimate medium of our intercourse; but somehow or other the letters which *he* delivered, and the packets which

were spread before us by *his* hands, acquired by degrees an increased value in our eyes. Leyva was besides faithful, unobtrusive, and efficient in the work he had undertaken ; so that in a remote and isolated country, where we had little to amuse or interest us, knowing, as we did, that he invariably came with a treat in his hands, the sight of him was always pleasant. It was not our own letters only which we looked to from him, but we had frequent despatches from Buenos Ayres, now taken to Corrientes, now direct to Goya ; and as these again often contained letters from *home*, it is no wonder that “ the arrival of Leyva ” came to be associated with the most pleasureable feelings of our hearts. No man, accordingly, did we like so much to see land at our door, as our courier ; and in justice to a trustworthy servant, or to his memory, for I am ignorant whether he belong now to the living or the dead, I have thought our readers would pardon me for saying thus much of the honest courier Leyva.

I will not mix him up with baser matter, but here conclude, assuring you, as usual, that I am

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER XXI.

W. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Peter Campbell's hot Temper—His Quarrel with George Washington Tuckerman, Esq.—His testy Appeal—We are suspected of issuing false Coin—Evidence adduced to the Contrary—Campbell's Energy.

ALTHOUGH our business, on the whole, went on smoothly, it was, like all other business in this world, now and then ruffled by some sudden little squall. The hot temper of Don Pedro Campbell, and a zeal which sometimes carried him beyond the line of his duty, and very often beyond that of discretion, called for a constant exertion of our authority, the one which he exclusively recognized, over him. He was himself thoroughly honest, indeed he had a contempt for money; and as he could not get the generality of the people of the country to adopt his strict notions of that rigid good faith which he himself observed, he had his hands full of disputes, bringing us in for a portion of the ill will which his severity in many cases engendered. He maintained that there were but two honest

Spaniards in the country, the Governor Mendez and Don Ysidoro Martinez; and as he often acted on this view, which was of course the very reverse of a just one, we were not unfrequently obliged "to humble him," as he called it, by reversing his decisions, when brought before us in the shape of appeal by the aggrieved parties.

There was one case, however, in which our Irish aid-de-camp, a good deal to our own mortification, came off triumphant. He and George Washington Tuckerman, Esquire, had taken a mortal dislike to each other: the latter finding it impossible to put up with Mr. Campbell's free and easy pretensions to be on an equality with him; and Campbell designating Mr. Tuckerman as an upstart wasp of a Yankee, without a grain of honesty in his composition. Tuckerman used to wonder how we could employ such a brute as Campbell, and Campbell looked with an ill-concealed contempt on our intimacy with Tuckerman.

Unreasonable as it may appear, Campbell's dislike of our North American friend was greatly increased by the latter's *presuming* to do business in those places where our operations on a large

scale were in force. Fully satisfied in his own mind of Mr. Tuckerman's dishonesty, yet not daring to take any proceedings against him, and indeed being strictly prohibited by us from interfering with our friend in his operations, the Irishman contented himself with watching, in silence, the movements of the American ; and his vigilance at last enabled him to pounce upon a case which ended to his entire satisfaction.

Tuckerman was an itinerant—I ought rather to say, an equestrian—merchant. Being in a small way, he went into the country himself, and made his purchases of produce of the small farmers and others, on the same principle nearly that Campbell adopted for us on a large scale.

In the course of his perambulations, Tuckerman came to the house of a party where about two hundred good hides lay snugly piled in a corner of the corredor. Our friend began to bargain for them ; and although the owner seemed to hesitate on the matter, and hinted something about his being “compromised” with Campbell, this detested name only made Tuckerman, perhaps, more desirous of having the hides. He offered an increased price ; cash down in gold. The estan-

ciero, not proof against such a battery, struck his flag of honesty. A bargain was made; a cart ordered to be put in readiness; and Don Jorge sat down at the cottage door, satisfied with his morning's operation.

But the ever vigilant Campbell was not so easily "to be done." That very morning he had heard that Tuckerman had gone to visit his (Campbell's) old friend of the two hundred hides; and not over certain of the estanciero's honesty, he determined to go himself and see that all was right.

It thus happened that, while the dishonest estanciero and Don Jorge were turning over and examining the hides, Campbell drew near to the cottage; and with an eagle eye observing at a distance what was going forward, he alighted from his horse, walked softly towards the corredor, and then suddenly striding up to the place, he confronted the astonished and convicted estanciero. In point of fact the hides were ours, and had been paid for by Campbell some time before. He looked at the estanciero in such a manner as distinctly to say, "I shall settle matters with you presently;" and then laying hold of Tuckerman's

collar with both his huge hands, he shook the little spare man into a fit of the asthma. "Oh, you villing!" cried Campbell; "have I found you out at last? I knowed what you were, you wasp! I knowed as how you'd be arter stingin your own friends! But now they'll find out if Campbell said the right thing or no when he tould them to beware of you, you villing!" With these words he gave the unfortunate American another tiger-like shake, and, pushing him away with disdain, he exclaimed, "Be off, ye varmint! and think shame to show your face again among honest men."

To what a pitch the rage, exasperation, and excitement of Don Jorge rose during this unworthy treatment of him by a man whom he loathed and despised, may be better imagined than described. But resistance was in vain. Nay, though he began with most eloquent abuse of Campbell, in so far as his asthma would permit him, he was soon frightened into silence; for a glare or two from the roused Irishman indicated that there was that brewing within which would soon burst out with uncontrollable violence, if allowed to go on in a fermenting state. Tuckerman, therefore, mounted

his horse and rode off, but so smarting under the indignities which he had just suffered, that he scarcely knew in what direction he was going.

What would have happened to the confounded and terrified *estanciero* it is difficult to say, had not his wife, with a woman's courage and readiness, placed herself between him and the infuriated Campbell. The latter, on the other hand, while the volubility of the wife's tongue, and both her and her husband's earnest deprecation of his wrath gave him time to cool, was soon so taken up with his supposed victory over his crestfallen enemy, Tuckerman, that he forgave the *estanciero* altogether ; instead, as the latter expected, of binding him hand and foot, and carrying him off as a rogue and malefactor. To screen himself the better, the *estanciero* gave an account of the transaction very unfavourable for Don Jorge ; and brimful of the whole affair, Campbell galloped off to Goya to denounce to myself our Washingtonian friend.

I could scarcely refrain from laughing on hearing the animated account which Campbell gave me of the transaction ; but I sharply reproved him for having treated Mr. Tuckerman in so rude a

manner, and I intimated to him that he must certainly make an apology for his having so unwarrantably taken the law into his own hands. At first Campbell flatly declared that he would rather quit our service than so degrade himself; but, by degrees, I was able to show him that he was in the wrong; and in the end, though with a very bad grace, he agreed to abide by my decision.

I received, as I anticipated I should, a very fiery letter from Tuckerman, insisting, in the first place, on Campbell being reprov'd in his presence, and begging his pardon; and, in the second, that the two hundred hides, whatever previous bargain might exist, should be delivered over to him. I told him in answer that I not only disapproved of Campbell's rude behaviour, but was extremely sorry that it had given rise to so just a complaint; and that I believed Campbell himself would now apologize for it: but that as to the two hundred hides, as Campbell, in this part of the business, had only done his duty, however maladroitly, I could not accede to Don Jorge's demand. I added, however, that, with a sincere desire to come to an amicable conclusion of the affair, I was ready to

let Don Jorge have two hundred hides from our own stock, at the same price he had agreed for those belonging to us, in the hands of the estanciero.

My proposal was not considered sufficiently satisfactory to heal the wound which our friend's honour had suffered ; and, with many romantic and high-flown expressions, Don Jorge replied that the conduct of our agent would no longer permit him to continue that interchange of soul,—that personal demonstration of refined friendship,—which, soaring high above all mercenary and grovelling considerations, had constituted one principal source of such imperfect felicity, as, in a foreign land, he had been permitted to enjoy.

So our intercourse was suddenly brought to a close, to the high gratification of Campbell, and to my own sincere regret,—seeing I could very ill spare, in the dearth of society in Goya, so pleasant and amusing a companion as Don Jorge Washington Tuckerman.

Another source of petty annoyance to us arose out of the jealousy and envy of small merchants, who fancied themselves aggrieved by our gigantic operations. They could not, with their mole-like

blindness, see—perhaps they *would* not—that although a large and new field was opened up for us, their old and narrow one was not invaded. We were no monopolists. There was ample room for the free competition of all. But then again, the would-be little monopolists complained that, by paying high prices, we ruined their trade; so that, if they resolved not, they cut short the problem thus:—"These great dealers, one way or other, are in possession of all the trade; let us, by hook or by crook, get quit of them, and then the trade will be divided among us." But the country at large thought differently; so that the small dealers went on barking, and, where they could, biting, while we held on our way to the mutual benefit of the province and ourselves.

In how many petty and foolish ways our competitors tried to cripple our action, it would be tedious, if not impossible, to relate; so I shall content myself with giving one instance, and *ex uno disce omnes*.

We were in the habit of introducing systematically large supplies of money from Buenos Ayres, in the shape of Spanish ounces or doubloons, a gold coin, worth three pounds five shillings. Most of our

purchases were made with this coin, and it gradually increased and placed on a better footing the before scanty currency of the country.

As I was dispatching, one forenoon, my general levee of agents, capataces, skippers, estancieros, couriers, &c.,—a person came into my room with something of alarm in his face, and said he wished me to change the doubloons I had given him in payment of his account the day before. On my asking him what was the matter with the doubloons I had given him, he said he had been told they were all bad. I looked at them and found they were all perfectly good. Change them I would not, though I told him he was welcome to his hides again on his giving me back my gold. The man demurred, but he finally left the gold with me, and said he would determine the following day what he should do.

Another came the same day with the same story, and a third before night. I began to make diligent inquiry, and found a report had been spread that all the supposed gold I received was base metal, manufactured in England, and that, in short, my brother and I were agents of a great British swindling company.

The report spread like wild fire, and a panic

ensued. In two days my door was besieged by a multitude of holders of bad ounces,—ignorant people, terror-seized ; and in such a state quite incompetent to see the plain fact that the gold they held in their hands was genuine and good.

But what was I to do? the excitement became greater and greater, was spreading to the lower class, and, if allowed to proceed, I was likely to pay in a very tragical manner for the misdeeds of my brother, myself, the Buenos Ayres swindlers and company.

I had a great block of wood brought to my door, and a sturdy peon, with a strong hatchet in his hand, placed by its side. A number of the “innocent holders” of the forged metallic issues of my exchequer were collected around. “Now,” said I, “gentlemen, the whole history and mystery of this case is, that there are in the province of Corrientes certain enemies to its prosperity, who, because they cannot themselves get your hides, would fain prevent you from getting money for them from us. They have maliciously raised this report that they may get for their *rials** that which is now producing

* A rial is sixpence.

you *doubloons*. They tell you that they are false: well, then, let those of you who have them hand to me three or four, or half a dozen of the worst looking, and let us examine them." I soon got a few into my hand, and laying one on the block, my sturdy peon at one blow divided it into two, and then the halves into quarters. Another and another was submitted to the same ordeal, till all present were satisfied that it was, indeed, gold which they had received. As the terror went off, people were astonished how they had allowed themselves to be duped, and the doubloons went as currently thenceforward as they had ever done before. I had, however, to send about twenty "hanged, drawn, and quartered," down to Buenos Ayres, as an evidence of the difficulty, sometimes, of passing not base, but genuine coin.

It must not be supposed that Don Pedro Quesnèy took any part in these underhand proceedings against us. On the contrary, he was the first to go about denouncing the authors of the rascally scheme; and at the quartering of the ounces he was eloquent in his own way in showing the *estancieros* and others what fools they were to give credence to

absurd stories only invented to make them the tools of their own destruction.

Another perplexity in our way, now and then, was the great difficulty we experienced, under the very unsettled state of the country, of getting from Buenos Ayres the large remittances required for our enterprise. The very soul of our business with the distrustful estancieros, was the ready money which they always had the certainty of receiving from us when they wanted it; and to disappoint them was to throw such doubts and difficulties in the way as to paralyse and derange our whole business.

As an apt illustration of the energy of our factotum Campbell, I may mention that, going on one occasion to Corrientes for the needful, and finding that my brother was much disappointed in expected remittances, he immediately offered to go down to Buenos Ayres himself. Accordingly he first galloped off to the different points of his operations, placed all in order for the expected duration of his absence, came to Goya, started for Buenos Ayres; and after travelling altogether about sixteen hundred miles on horseback, he returned with his Squire Edwardo, loaded with doubloons, paying

many of his estancieros with gold brought from Buenos Ayres, which they supposed had been lying all the time in our coffers at Corrientes, or Goya.

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER XXII.

W. P. R. TO GENERAL MILLER.

The Family of Mr. Postlethwaite—Their arrival at Goya—The Beauty of the new Comers—Don Pedro's Ecstasy—George Washington Tuckerman, Esq., acts the Physician—His Apostrophe—The Love Affair—Don Jorge pines—He is in Extacy—Weeps—And seeks for the "DORADO."

London, 1842.

NOT long after our settlement at Corrientes, our friend Mr. Postlethwaite received accounts of the arrival at Buenos Ayres of his wife and four daughters. As his stay in the interior was likely to be protracted, he determined to have his family up to Corrientes, and accordingly, in April 1816, he set off for the capital of the River Plate provinces. There he happily arrived, after many detentions on the road, occasioned by the disturbed state of the country, and he made arrangements for returning in our vessel, the San José, which was then loading for Goya and Corrientes, and in which we ourselves proposed to take our final departure from the province, after winding up our hide speculation.

It may easily be supposed that we awaited with no slight degree of impatience the fulfilment of an event so fraught with interest to us as the arrival of an English family, and that the family of an old friend, in a place shut out from the world like Corrientes, where, since its first discovery by the Spaniards, no Englishwoman ever yet had been, and where the inhabitants had formed no more correct idea of what an "Inglesa" was, than such as they had gleaned from the leaves of some not very modern novel which had found its way into this almost impenetrable by-path of literature.

After having one night sat up very late, in order to allow Leyva to set off by break of day with my despatches, I retired quite fatigued to rest; and although accustomed to very early rising, I was on this occasion indulging in a last nap, towards seven o'clock in the morning, when a violent knocking at my door thoroughly aroused me. Presently I heard the old rough weather-beaten catalan skipper of the San José calling out, "Don Guillermo! Don Guillermo! aqui hé traído la familia de Don Juan;"—(here I am with Don Juan and his family.) Up I started in a moment, dressed myself quite in a flutter, and in a quarter of an

hour, I was embracing Postlethwaite, and welcoming all the members of his family to Goya.

I had not seen an Englishwoman for nearly two years. What a sudden flow of delightful sensations on finding myself surrounded by my own countrywomen eight thousand miles from home! to hear them, in soft and gentle accents, breathe my native tongue! The motherly look of Mrs. Postlethwaite, who wore spectacles and looked the very perfection of a kind-hearted matron of the land which is a pattern of the character,—the beaming countenances and fine flush of four handsome English maidens, the oldest of them not yet eighteen,—the neat morning dresses, the little silk aprons, the natural and graceful curls, the open, lively, and unaffected deportment,—the unrestrained and natural pleasure on meeting with their father's friend, and the father's fond pride as he affectionately looked first at one and then at another of his nice family,—all aroused in my breast every *home* feeling which had so long lain in a dormant state, and constituted that moment really one of the most delightful which I recollect ever to have experienced.

There *is* no place like home, and those who have

travelled furthest from it have the strongest convictions of the fact. The scenes of our early days,—the brooks and the rills,—the spreading oaks,—the daisy-covered meads,—“the banks and braes,”—the mossy rock and the breezy hill,—the looks of love from those to whom we were wont to cling,—the ardent affection of our play-mates,—the joyous laugh,—the bounding and elastic step,—the intensity, and yet the innocence, of our pleasures;—these, and a thousand others, are the parasitical plants that spring up and twine themselves round our hearts in the days of our childhood; that strengthen as our minds unfold and expand; that take root and grow into the very core of our hearts; and which, firmly knit together, we can never pluck out in our later years.

With Mr. and Mrs. Postlethwaite, then, and their family, I felt myself once more *at home*; and I could not possibly do otherwise than experience the strongest regret that, during the short remaining time of my sojourn in the province of Corrientes, they were to be in one part of it and I in another.

On this my first introduction to Mr. Postlethwaite's family, I was permitted a mere glimpse

of those home feelings to which I have referred; for they only spent a few hours with me at the "port" on their way to Corrientes. The wind was fair for their proceeding up the river; and as it is a serious matter to lose a fair wind, which is but occasionally to be had on the Paraná, I was not so selfish as to desire the company of my fair and newly-acquired friends at the risk of their being exposed to a Mosquito battle, on the waters, such as I have elsewhere described.

I could not, however, think of their passing the port without seeing its lions, particularly as it by no means required the same length of time to do so as to view those of London.

The young ladies themselves, during their hurried visit to Goya, were by far the greatest "lions" of which the village had ever been able to boast, since it had been called into existence by its old foundress. Every man, woman, and child, flew out to see them, as I took them from my cottage to the mansion of Don Pedro Quesnèy, in order to introduce them to our great man of Goya; and with the natural impulse of untutored villagers, the worthy folks of the port flocked around us and gave unrestrained vent to their admiration on seeing "las Inglesitas."

"Virgin Santisima! què lindas!" (Heaven! how lovely!) exclaimed one.

"Jesus de mi alma! Gracious powers, what a skin! what a beautiful colour!" cried another.

"Ave Maria! look at their bonnets!" said a third.

"God bless them! God bless them! they are angels!" called out a fourth: and in this way they remarked on their fine eyes, their handsome figures, their novel dress, their smiling looks, apostrophizing me ever and anon with "Ah Don Guillermo! how fair your countrywomen (paysanitas) are! vivan mil años! (long may they live!) God bless them! God bless them!"

Don Pedro Quesnèy seemed quite overpowered when he saw his house honoured by such charming inmates. He bowed and scraped, and threw every possible fascination into the expression of his countenance.

"Ah Seigneur!" he said, as he ushered us in, bowing and walking backwards, "I am verree proud—mon ami. Don Shuang (Mr. Postlethwaite's name was John), I am sharm to see les demoiselles! Ah madame!" (to Mrs. P.) "dat you do me dee honneur to come in! Vangtur! put dee

shair—vite! and des shairs for dee yong ladees.” Then squeezing Mr. Postlethwaite’s hand, he continued, “Ah Don Shuang! you do dine here to-day veed Madame et les demoiselles, and my ver goot fren Don Guillerm—va! c’est bon—ah Seigneur!” and so he clasped his hands, as was his wont, and looked most theatrically “sharm” to see us all.

Our friends, however, could not stay to dinner, so we all returned and had an *English luncheon* on board the San José. Mrs. Postlethwaite and the young ladies were highly amused, as well they might be, with my establishment; and after surveying it well, Miss Postlethwaite archly asked papa if *all* the houses in Corrientes were as grand and as large as mine? They were, however, most particularly struck with my tiger skin carpet, and they were clearly of opinion that neither Kidderminster nor Brussels were wanted in a country which could produce carpeting such as mine.

The San José arrived at seven in the morning, and between one and two Mr. Postlethwaite and his family were once more on board, and the vessel under weigh. Many of the villagers lined the banks of the river as the new comers departed, and to the end their delight was expressed in the warmest

terms and most forcible exclamations. The young ladies could not help seeing that their "first appearance" on the Goya stage had caused a great sensation; but happily their little acquaintance, as yet, with the Spanish language, and its hyperbolic terms, saved them from the blushes with which they would have been covered had they understood all the enthusiastic and undisguised compliments which their appearance elicited from the simple and kind-hearted inhabitants of Goya.

During the three months which elapsed between the arrival of Mr. Postlethwaite's family and the departure of my brother and myself for Buenos Ayres, I was not able once to go to Corrientes to improve my acquaintance with the ladies, and to have the pleasure of hearing from the Correntinas directly those praises which my brother informed me they lavished on our countrywomen.

Soon after the new arrival, being the winter season, I was attacked with what is in South America called "Ayre" in the face, a muscular inflammation attended with great pain, and an extraordinary stiffening of the jaws. While confined to the house, indeed to bed, by the attack, I received a letter from Don Andres Gomez, our old

Paraguay friend and agent, dated from on board a smack lying five leagues from Goya. His communication was to the effect that he was on his way to Assumption; that fearing detention or difficulty, he did not wish to touch either at Goya or Corrientes; but that he desired much to see me, and begged I would accompany the confidential messenger he had sent, who would guide me to the vessel. Ill as I was I got up and reached Gomez more dead than alive. He had brought five hundred doubloons for us from Buenos Ayres, and after an hour spent in pain with him, I set off for Goya again, attended by his man, carrying the five hundred doubloons. The roads were bad, the wind piercingly cold, and before we had proceeded half way, darkness overtook us. We kept galloping on, but stumbling on a hole in the track, my horse came heavily down, and I not being sufficiently *ginète* to land on my feet, as my ill star would have it I landed on my face, and *of course* on the side of it which was suffering from the *ayre*. Gomez's man conveyed me home the best way he could, but I got rapidly worse, and next day I was excessively ill and quite unable to speak.

In this helpless state the curanderas, or old

doctresses, were sent to me, and not being able to make any resistance, they did as they pleased with me, so that as a matter of course I got worse, and it was presently rumoured that I was about to die. Don Pedro came frequently to me, and wrung his hands most piteously. The comandante was in despair, because I gave him to understand that he must not just yet send off a courier to Corrientes; and all were greatly terrified on my shaking my head negatively when administration of extreme unction was suggested. The older people thought Goya would never thrive more if an unshriven heretic were to die in the port.

I have mentioned this illness, because it brought an old friend once more and characteristically into play. The testy, but warm-hearted Tuckerman arrived at Goya just as the curanderas were beginning to consider my case desperate, and no sooner did he hear of my illness than he hastened on the instant to my cottage. He forgot his Campbell grievances and his wounded pride, and flew to the relief of his former friend. The very sight of him revived me, and I heartily coincided in his first and favourite movement of turning the curanderas out of doors. He never stirred

from my room during two days, nor did he take any rest during the nights; so that on the third day, with his really clever management, I was quite convalescent.

Mr. Tuckerman, I think, had in his own mind desired a reconciliation with us for some time, and it could not possibly have taken place under circumstances more perfectly congenial with his feelings. The high romance with which he invested all the occurrences of life was not lost on this occasion. On the contrary, his delight in having had such an opportunity of showing his magnanimity and skill, on both which he prided himself much, rose to a sort of extacy as he heard me pour out my unfeigned thanks for having probably saved my life, and at all events certainly rescued me quickly from a severe and painful illness, which could only have increased but for his timely and generous interference.

“ Ah Mr. Robertson ! ” exclaimed Don Jorge, “ I feel as if you were the physician and I the patient ; for your words pour the healing balm of renewed friendship on a wounded spirit. Yes ! I confess that when my honour demanded I should burst asunder those bands which had so closely

united me to your brother and yourself, I made a sacrifice of the greatest portion of my pleasure and happiness in this country where all were strangers, and we, I might say, alone were brethren. But when I heard of your illness, of your danger, my wonted feelings of friendship rushed to my heart, and I instantly found myself at your side ready to use my humble but zealous efforts to bring you back to health,—to restore you to those many dear friends whom my imagination pictured to me hanging over your sick-bed in anxious and foreboding fears of the result. And now, my dear friend," (squeezing my hand) "how happy do I feel that Heaven has answered my prayers! how proud that I have been the instrumental means of giving you again the flush of rosy health!"

This was the usual style of Mr. Tuckerman's conversation: love, friendship, glory, the United States, and visions of the future, were the favourite themes on which he was ever ready to dilate.

I recollect well, soon after my brother and I got intimate with our romantic friend, of an amusing and characteristic conversation which took place between us, as we sat in my cottage in the cool of the evening, looking out upon the placid river, on

which the beams of the rising moon had just begun to play. Tuckerman had made us some superlative coffee, and as he held his cup in one hand and in his other his pipe, of which, notwithstanding its unromantic character, he was very fond, he seemed to give himself up to the most pleasing reveries.

"Why, Mr. Tuckerman," said my brother, "one would think you were dreaming of your first love."

"Heavens! Mr. Robertson," answered Tuckerman, "how could you divine so exactly my thoughts! Yes," (with a sigh and a puff at the pipe) "I was indeed lost in reminiscences of my dearest Charlotte."

"Have you any objection, Don Jorge," said I, "to let us know something of the young lady who has had the rare happiness to secure the affections of one who knows how well where to bestow them as you do?"

"Ah! my friend," answered Don Jorge, "you have struck a note which vibrates on the finest chords of my heart! But," he added with a complacent smile, "I can assuredly have no objection to unbosom my fondest feelings to such friends as you are, who I know will so readily and so tenderly

sympathize in the exalted passion which fills my breast.

“In point of fact my story is very simple. My adored Charlotte is the youngest daughter” (Don Jorge, as we have elsewhere hinted, was verging towards forty) “of our old friend and neighbour, Judge Holland, a distinguished jurist of the States, and who, in his capacity of senator, had rendered himself equally celebrated as a statesman. His wife was the most amiable of women, and still a handsome matron; his two sons followed in their father’s footsteps; and the three daughters were no less the pride of the judge and his lady, than the admiration of the *haut ton* of Washington.

“But Charlotte! oh how shall I describe her!” Here Don Jorge, laying down his coffee cup, rose up, and still holding at arm’s length his pipe in his left hand, he laid his right on his heart, and then resumed.

“When I first knew her, Charlotte was a bud of beauty bursting into sixteen. Her form, symmetrical in all its turns, was of aërial, sylph-like lightness. Her whole soul beamed in her soft languishing blue eye. Her auburn hair, braided in front, fell behind in simple ringlets over her

neck. Every feature of her countenance was a fit study for the chisel of Canova! Such a mouth! What lips! when, half opened, half shut by a dimpled smile, they partly showed the ivory teeth which they protected! And then her cheeks, where the vermilion softly tinted a skin which everywhere else rivalled the lily in whiteness! Her high, polished, intellectual forehead! Her arms, so beautifully rounded! her rosy fingers so exquisitely tapered! Oh gentlemen! my Charlotte is an angel!"

Here Don Jorge gave the tips of his own untapered fingers, gathered to a point, one of his usual smacks, his face lit up with unmixed delight, as he thus concluded his record of the personal charms of Charlotte. He then proceeded:—

"Need I say, gentlemen, that so beautiful a casket was intended by nature to enclose a gem beyond all price? I see you anticipate what I have to say. Charlotte's mind was indeed of the highest order,—her soul the purest emanation of Heaven! She was soft, gentle, lovely, intellectual, elegant, accomplished,—a being whom it was impossible to look upon without loving,—a beautiful flower of our own free and happy land, which blos-

somed more richly year by year, and which at last shed a fragrance around which arrested and fascinated every one who came within the magic circle of its influence.

“Can you be surprised if, as I saw this beautiful creature advance to womanhood, I sighed to possess so rare a combination of every earthly charm? I loved—ardently loved—Charlotte, but alas! my flame burnt in secret, for I was chilled with the fear that her affections were given to another.

“I had, indeed, a powerful, let me confess an elegant,” (a smack at the tips of the fingers), “but truth compels me to add a hated, rival. Charles Jackson, son of Counsellor Jackson, was the man. He was bold, forward, of easy address, and possessed of many accomplishments. For myself, being naturally timid and bashful,” (we looked at Don Jorge, to see if he spoke in earnest, and he was as grave as an owl,) “I fancied my claims were less powerful than those of my rival, and, under this belief, I pined in secret. My friends got alarmed for my health; and travel, united with active business pursuits, was recommended for me.

At Judge Holland’s house, where I was always a

welcome visitor, the absence of my accustomed vivacity and high flow of spirits was gradually observed, and the fair Charlotte sometimes rallied me on the change. Oh ! how my heart beat on such occasions ! How I longed to unbosom the real cause of my sadness ; and to pray for the only relief of which my malady would allow !”

Don Jorge here made a pause, relit his pipe, which in the ardour of his feelings, he had allowed to go out, and then, full of animation, he came to the finale of his love affairs.

“ My dear friends,” said he, “ I am now about to surprise you, I am sure agreeably ; and it is as manna in the desert to me, to find a congeniality of soul, such as ours in this far distant and barbarous land. When the time for my departure was fast approaching, I called one forenoon at Judge Holland’s, and found all the family, Charlotte excepted, at luncheon in the parlour. After sitting for some time, I ventured, while I suppressed a rising sigh, to ask after the health of my amiable and lovely friend Charlotte, not seeing her in the family group. ‘ Ah ! very true,’ said Mrs. Holland, ‘ we have all been out this morning, and Charlotte, feeling fatigued, remained, when we came down, in the drawing-room,

where I think she must have fallen asleep. Come George,' she added, 'do you run up stairs and bring her down.'

"In a moment a tumult of contending passions filled my breast. What an occasion, what an opportunity to declare my passion! I went softly up stairs, and gently opened the drawing-room door. On one of the magnificent couches which adorned the splendid saloon, lay the extended figure of the beauteous Charlotte. Her alabaster arm was under her head, her lovely neck was partially uncovered; and her exquisitely formed ankle, and small delicate foot just peeped from under her walking dress. I could hear her softly breathe in her sleep. I looked on the beautiful vision before me, and I was almost entranced. But, Oh heavens! how shall I tell you what followed? A slight movement in Charlotte's angelic countenance showed me that a dream broke in upon her slumber; presently her lips moved, and in gentle, murmuring accents, she twice pronounced my name! George! George!

"In silent extacy, I clasped my hands together," (Don Jorge having laid down his pipe, here suited the action to the word,) "I knelt, bent over the

sleeping angel, and in a moment of delirious transport, I imprinted a passionate kiss on her forehead!

“She awoke! looked around, alarmed and confused, like a timid hare. For a moment her eyes rested upon me, and with both hands she covered her face, suffused with crimson blushes. She started to her feet! ‘Adorable Charlotte!’ I faltered out;—a moment she trembled, yet cast upon me a truly seraphic look. ‘Dearest George!’ at length she murmured, and then she sank into my arms!”

“Bravo! bravo!” exclaimed my brother and I together, “victory, and the prize your own.”

Don Jorge was in extacies. He embraced first the one of us, then the other; he took up his pipe and waved it over his head; and he listened with a smile of conscious greatness, as we congratulated him on so splendid a conquest.

“Need I relate the sequel?” said our friend; “I found that Charlotte, like myself, indulged in a secret passion, and pined over it, to the distress of her fond father, the judge, and of his accomplished wife. They longed, in fact, to see me the suitor of their daughter, who, in the meantime, gave no encouragement to my persevering rival.

“ Under these explanations, we descended to the parlour, my fond arm gently encircling the fairy form of my Charlotte, who blushed,” (Don Jorge raised his eyes and his arms in a theatrical manner,) “with an ill-concealed joy. As we entered in this manner, the judge started to his feet, for a moment gazed upon us, and then, comprehending, with the quickness of lightning, all that had passed, he hastened to the spot on which we stood, bent his tall and majestic figure over us, and warmly and eloquently poured forth a blessing on our reciprocal love. Mrs. Holland, clasping her hands, raised her fine eyes to Heaven, while a tear of gratitude stole down her still beautiful cheek. The young Hollands and their sisters formed themselves into a group, and smiled on the consummation of the family’s hopes. Oh tender and affecting scene, indelibly written on my heart, aye, never, never to be obliterated !”

Don Jorge’s white mouchoir was here drawn forth, and applied with much effect to his eyes, which having dried, he resumed with a cheerful air.

“The day of my declaration and admission as the recognized suitor of Charlotte, ended in festivities in the house of Judge Holland, the members

of that of Tuckerman being invited to partake of them. Readily they did so, and joy and happiness beamed in the countenance of every individual on that ever memorable occasion.

“It was agreed that my voyage should still be undertaken, and that I should set forth, to gain by my own exertions, a competent provision for the woman of my choice. On that pursuit I am now here; and you may conceive with what ardour and longing I look forward to the thrice blessed day which is again to restore me to my adored Charlotte.”

Such was Don Jorge Tuckerman's account of his engagement with the beautiful Charlotte; and I find it has drawn out my letter to such a length, that I must hasten to subscribe myself

Your's, &c.

W. P. R.

LETTER XXIII.

J. P. R. to GENERAL MILLER.

Don Agustin Saenz, Captain of the Polacca—His Dainties—An Arrival—The Family of the Postlethwaites—Change in Domestic Habits—Don Ysidoro and Mr. Postlethwaite—Final Departure from Corrientes.

London, 1842.

I HAVE already made special mention of Don Agustin Saenz, who commanded the polacca Florentina, and made frequent voyages between Buenos Ayres and Corrientes. He was an Andalusian, of burly person, rubicund countenance, large mouth, twinkling eyes, dimpled chin, rather consequential gait, and, like most of his countrymen, had a considerable fund of broad humour. He was jovial, goodnatured, and hospitable, an unconscionable laughter at his own jokes, and though sometimes rather coarse in making his points, he was ever prepared to take two thrusts for one from his opponents. When dressed for mass of a Sunday, he was the fine and gaudy, but awkward sailor, all over. One could see in a moment that that was

the only day on which he paid any attention to costume; and then his fine glossy coat and trowsers were made so badly, his buttons were so conspicuously Brummagem, and his whole dress put on so maladroitly, as to lead to the veritable conclusion that he was an animal of the amphibious race. The moment he came home from mass, he stripped himself of his cumbrous finery; and in a blue jacket and white trowsers, stood forward once more upon his quarter-deck, no longer amphibious, but a decided native of the deep.

Don Agustin was the man upon whom Don Ysidoro Martinez loved to crack his jokes, and the former was sometimes well pleased to be provoked to rather a hot rejoinder. Don Ysidoro was all hilarity, self-complacency, and good humour. Don Agustin was somewhat peppery, and inflated withal; but he soon cooled, and let the steam pressure of his momentary huff escape by the safety valves of his dimpled smiles and merry little twinkling eyes.

Don Agustin was ever welcome to Corrientes; but, as I have already hinted, on no account so much as on that of his always bringing with him a rich supply of porter, ale, pickles, cheese, hams, and

Carlón wine. For myself he always brought some special dainties from my Buenos Ayres friends; and so when Don Agustin was out a few days beyond his time, Don Ysidoro and I were for ever on St. Sebastian's point, looking out with our telescopes for the far-famed polacca.

When the Florentina was in port, moored close to the green banks of the river, we were wont on those beautiful evenings, when the Paraná is gliding down in her deep, quiet, and silvery expanse of waters, to hie on board, there to partake of the jolly little captain's hospitality, to smoke our segars, and I to listen to the wit of the two rival jokers. How Captain Saenz used to entertain other visitors, and with what object, I have already related.

One evening as we sat on the Florentina's deck, there appeared in the distance, slowly stemming the stream, a vessel which, by hoisting the English flag, I knew to be ours. It was the San José, which, having called at Goya a few days before, as I had learned from my brother, I daily looked for, and for the expected arrival of which I felt quite on the *qui vive*. She came freighted with Mr. and Mrs. Postlethwaite and their four young

and handsome daughters. Off immediately I set in Don Agustin's boat; saluted the ladies young and old; and then congratulated their worthy father on his being the trunk from which had sprung so many delicate and goodly shoots. Condolence for their sufferings during a tedious passage of two months against the stream followed my hearty welcome to the new comers. Their appearance was to me,—long debarred as I had been from English female society,—like the oasis in the desert; and feelings connected with home, which for years had only been kept warm by the powers of memory, were now, for the first time, embodied by the society, in a distant land, of my fair young countrywomen. Their rosy countenances, peeping from under their neat straw-bonnets, contrasted advantageously with the pallid and sometimes sallow countenances of the Correntinas; and the appearance, both of mother and daughters, was so exclusively *English*, that I seemed to be transplanted from the sunny banks of the Paraná to the breezy hills and invigorating air of Cumberland, whence Mr. Postlethwaite's family had made their long, arduous, but willing voyage to join the husband and the father in South America.

The news of the arrival of the “Inglesas,” or English ladies, spread like wildfire; and as we drew to land, near Don Agustin’s polacca, we found many of the élite already assembled to welcome the fair strangers and escort them to my house. We walked home with a staff that would have done honour to the governor himself,—one and all vying with each other to pay some compliment to their novel and unexpected guests. Eyes, foreheads, auburn ringlets, rosy cheeks, lily white hands, small feet, well-turned ankles, dimpled chins, and ivory teeth, all came in for a share of commendation; and as the ladies did not understand Spanish, it fell to my pleasing lot to be interpreter to them, in which capacity it was no difficult task to add “*Amen*” to the end of every sentence. One person, alone, of the company, seemed to be sad: it was poor Doña Florinda. She felt her star setting in the vicinity of the bright constellation which had now, for the first time, appeared in the horizon of Corrientes. She looked despondingly; snuffed incessantly; limped more evidently; and, though too well bred not to be foremost in her congratulations, it was evidently up-hill work with her.

As our cortège slowly walked along the sandy but umbrageous streets, all the Correntinas, and Correntinos too, ran to their doors and corridors to catch a glimpse of the Inglesitas. The gesticulations and exclamations of the natives, especially of the womankind, were as unmeasured as they were unpremeditated. Up went their hands; up went their eyes: “*Què bonita! què preciosa! Oh mai!*” and other ejaculations, all alike of unqualified wonder and praise, showed the Miss Postlethwaites that they were come to be,—what not many ladies have much objection to be,—the divinities of the place. Their mother looked on with a complacent smile, (what mother could do less?) and my friend Postlethwaite was full of natural pride and self-congratulation. For my own part, I was truly glad in that remote region, to see such unfeigned kindness and respect evinced towards those, who, having experienced the pain of a long separation, had left their native country in order to be reunited to their natural protector. Had they been chilled by the cold reception of the inhabitants of Corrientes, or inquisitorially dealt with by the priests, they must either have lingered out their time in

loneliness or distrust till Mr. Postlethwaite had wound up his affairs, or have returned without *him*, for whose sake alone they had come so far.

But it was not in the hearts of the Correntinos thus to behave to strangers, who have ever experienced among them the most single-hearted kindness and hospitality.

When we arrived at home, I gladly made over house and household establishment to Mrs. Postlethwaite, who was not less noted for her conjugal and maternal affection than for her domestic management and good sense.

The day after the arrival of the ladies the whole town called, and it was difficult to get away the first group of gossips, young ladies and mothers, in order to make way for succeeding ones. They all seemed gratified with the beauty, elegance, and simplicity of their guests; they repeated all over again about the eyes, teeth, and cheeks, while, with great kindness and unwonted favour, they hugged and kissed the new colonists.

At length the house was left in quiet; Mrs. Postlethwaite had arranged all about dinner; and, with sashes drawn and candles lit, the ladies in full

dress, and the gentlemen in high glee, we sat down, a party of *nine*, to quite an English dinner, served up in quite an English style.

The party thus congregated consisted of—

Mr. Postlethwaite and his family . . . 6

Don Felipe and Don Jorge Tuckerman . 2

And myself 1

—

In all 9

Such a sight was not to be seen within eight hundred miles of us. I was the original nucleus around which the society had congregated. I now resigned my station to my more patriarchal friend; placed his wife at the head of the table, and distributed the young ladies as impartially as possible among the gentlemen, being myself especially partial to the youngest, a lively little laughing damsel, twelve years of age, whom we christened Mrs. Bond. The sobriquet was given in honour of a song she used to sing, in which a lady of the name of Bond plays a prominent part among her ducks and ducklings, inviting them to come, of their own accord, to be killed and stuffed for the accommodation of passengers,—a song with which, I dare say, some of my young readers are well acquainted.

It was a new thing with me to take wine with the ladies, to be helped with their white hands, to see the table radiant with their smiles, to be entreated by the matron to take a little more of some nice dish of her own cooking, and to see the newly constituted patriarch with a famous English roast before him,—a turkey, goose, or sirloin of beef, into which he was wont to cut with the anatomical precision of a scientific carver. I used to see much of the Correntinas, but they did not exactly manage things after this fashion.

The dinner ended, we had a little quadrille, and after the quadrille a little bagatelle, and after the bagatelle a little light supper, after supper a little negus, and then a sound sleep.

Such was the manner in which we passed our days, returning all visits in the forenoon, riding with the ladies (for whom we procured four handsome ponies) in the afternoon; sometimes shooting, sometimes sailing on the Paraná, but always back to head quarters at the "*mess hour*."

Mr. Postlethwaite had been a favourite with Don Ysidoro Martinez, who now became our constant visitor; and it was delightful to see his fine old-school Spanish politeness and gallantry with the

ladies. With a tendency to be corpulent, he had yet a fine erect figure, and a pleasing intelligent countenance. Though verging towards sixty, he dressed well, had a sprinkling of dandyism, and always set himself off to the best advantage when cultivating the good graces of the English ladies.

Both he and Mr. Postlethwaite have long been gathered to their fathers. Peace to their manes ! They were both truly worthy honest men. Mr. Postlethwaite, while he possessed plenty of spirit, yet overflowed with the milk of human kindness ; and, with some innocent peculiarities, he was one of the most pleasing and entertaining companions possible.

But I must prepare to make my exit from Corrientes, by giving as brief a sketch of my departure as possible. Our affairs there were nearly wound up, our property all embarked, and what remained to be done was entrusted to the charge of Mr. Postlethwaite. Our brigantine, the *San José*, was waiting for me, with the *Florentina* to accompany her. I had only to bid adieu to the Correntinos, without the chance of ever seeing them again. I suppose if even I were to return there *now*, I should not know one face in fifty.

Every friend I had (and they were many) came down to the vessel to see me off. I bade—what was becoming every day, by anticipation, a more reluctant adieu—a kind farewell to the Correntinos and to my English friends.

As commodore of the squadron of two vessels, I hoisted my broad pennant on board of the San José, and amid waving of handkerchiefs, the shedding of the usual portion of tears, many embraces, and promises exacted and given to write, I loosed from our picturesque moorings, and with all sail set, in less than an hour rounded the point which shut both Corrientes and its inhabitants out from my view. In three days I joined my brother at his rancho or hut in Goya, and what ensued, previously to our quitting this place, I leave him to relate.

Your's, &c.,

J. P. R.

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